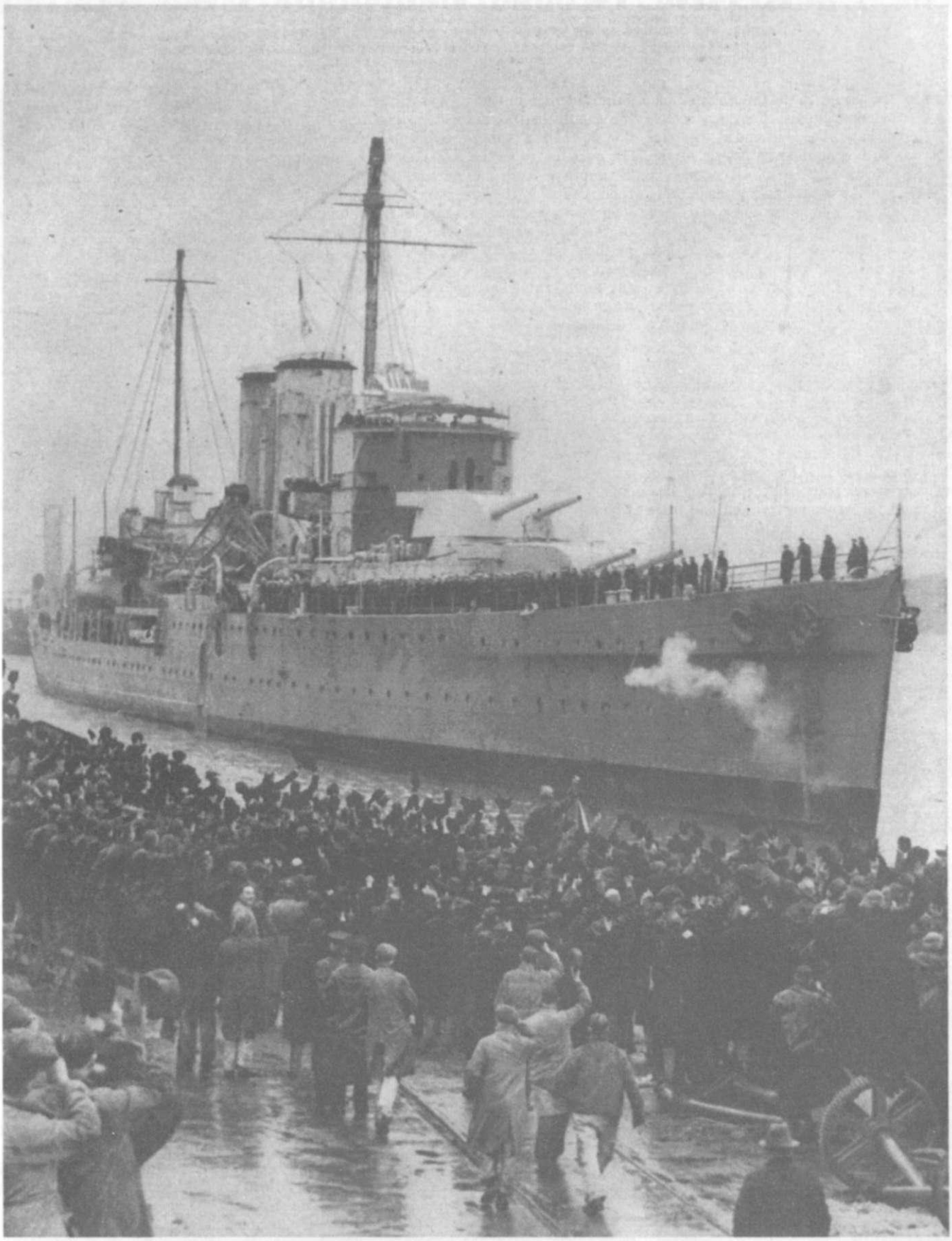


'WE ARE THE "EXETER" STRAIGHT FROM THE WEST'

As H.M.S. "Exeter" steamed past the cheering crowds, her band of 50 Royal Marines played a selection of music beginning with the ship's song, "We are the 'Exeter' straight from the West." In this case it had a double significance, for she was straight from the great naval victory in the Western ocean. Those who cheered her included Service men, dockyard hands, and many civilians, men, women and children, among them being relations of members of the crew, many of whom are Devon men.

Photo, Planet News

The Finns Give Ground but Fight Even Harder

In what was described as the greatest battle to be fought in Europe since 1918, the Finns were compelled in mid-February to give ground before the Russian onslaught on the Mannerheim Line. In the chapter below an analysis of the resulting situation is briefly presented.

THE attack on the Mannerheim Line that opened with February seems to have been intended by the Russians to be the decisive battle of the war. For the onslaught they massed 150,000 men, and along a considerable portion of the front their heavy artillery were ranged wheel to wheel. Huge numbers of tanks were also made ready, and when zero hour came these moved forward like the phalanxes of old. Then from above 600 Soviet 'planes were employed to clear the ground for the advancing infantry and to harass Finnish communications.

For a fortnight the Finnish lines remained firm despite the tremendous pounding to which they were subjected by the Russian guns. It was estimated that 300,000 shells fell on the Finnish advanced positions in the course of a single day. The Finns did all that brave men could do, but they were wearied after fighting day and night for weeks on end and had little or no reserves to fling into the fight, whereas the Russians, despite their enormous casualties, were always apparently able to bring up unlimited fresh troops. The Finnish big gun ammunition, too, was beginning to run short.

Overwhelmed by a tornado of steel and iron and human flesh, it was hardly surprising that on February 14 the Finns admitted that in the area east of Summa the enemy had succeeded in capturing a few of their advanced positions, and in the next few days the Russians were able to improve their advantage, extending their gains until they could claim that long stretches of the Finnish front line in the Summa and Muola sectors were in their hands. At the same time they conveyed some troops across the ice past the Finns' extreme right flank to within a few miles of Viipuri.

For a few days the Finns' situation seemed desperate, even critical. The Russian papers were filled with the exploits of the Red troops who were engaged in the task of capturing pill-boxes and subterranean fortifications.

Some indications of the fierceness of the fighting is given by the admission that few Finnish prisoners were taken, as usually the garrisons of these little forts held out till the last man; what few prisoners were captured were either wounded or

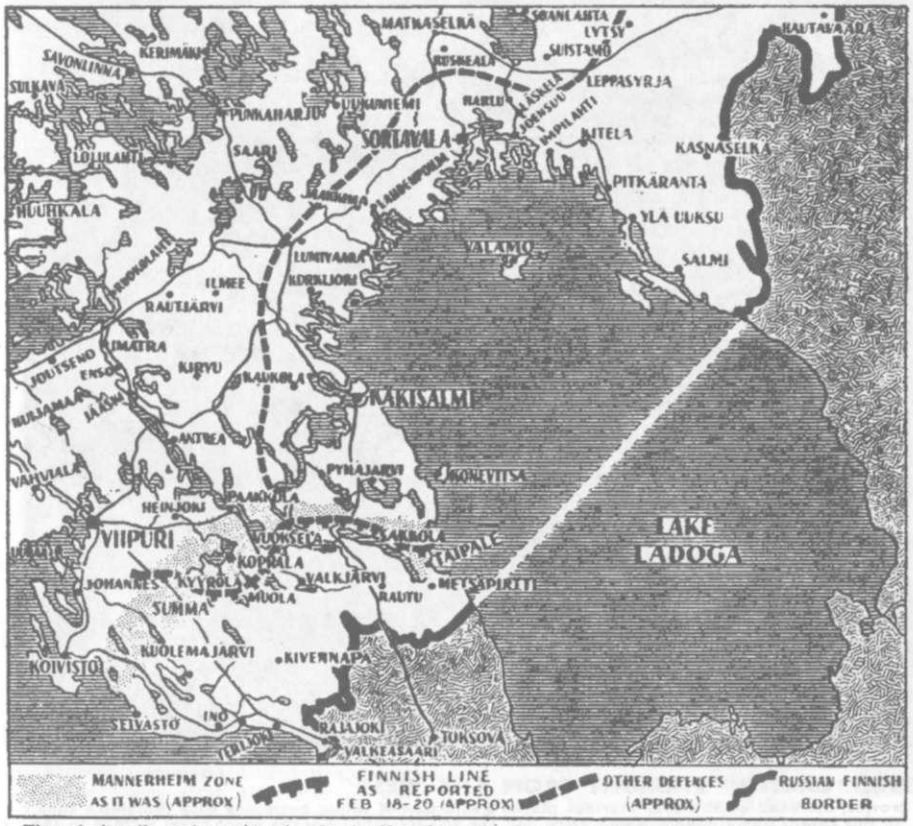
With the temperature many degrees below zero the Finnish Army has found portable shelters such as this a valuable protection against the rigour of the climate.
Photo, Wide World

"punch drunk," to use a boxing phrase, from the concussion of bombs and shells falling on the concrete walls and roofs of their emplacements.

But though driven from their front line defences over a total width of some 10 miles, the Finns were enabled to withdraw to a second line, scarcely inferior in strength to the first. Behind them, reaching back through the tangle of forest, lake and river—the Vuoksi, it may be remarked, is as wide as the Thames at Westminster—were fortifications to a depth of some ten, or even twenty miles.

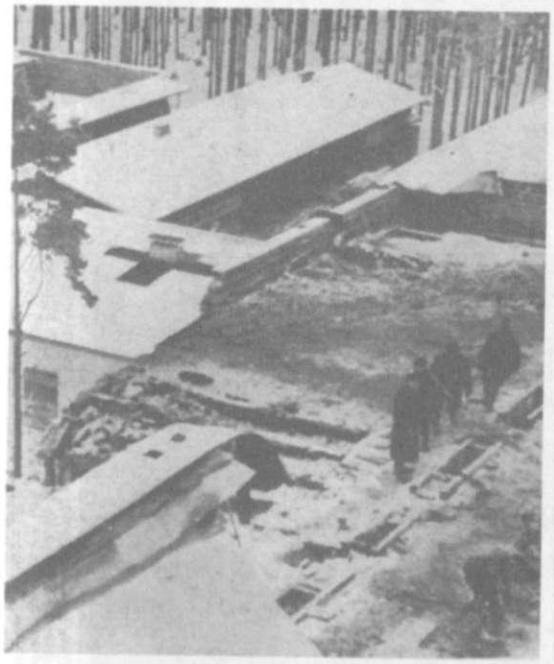
Thus, even if the Russians were able to overrun the whole of the Mannerheim Line the war would by no means be over. There is no country in Europe which is more unsuited for mechanized warfare than Finland with its thousand lakes and huge forests traversed by narrow tracks. By February 20 a heavy blizzard had begun to sweep through Finland, holding up Soviet operations on air and land. Following the snowstorms, there usually comes the thaw when, to a very large extent, the surface of Finland will be converted into one huge impassable swamp.

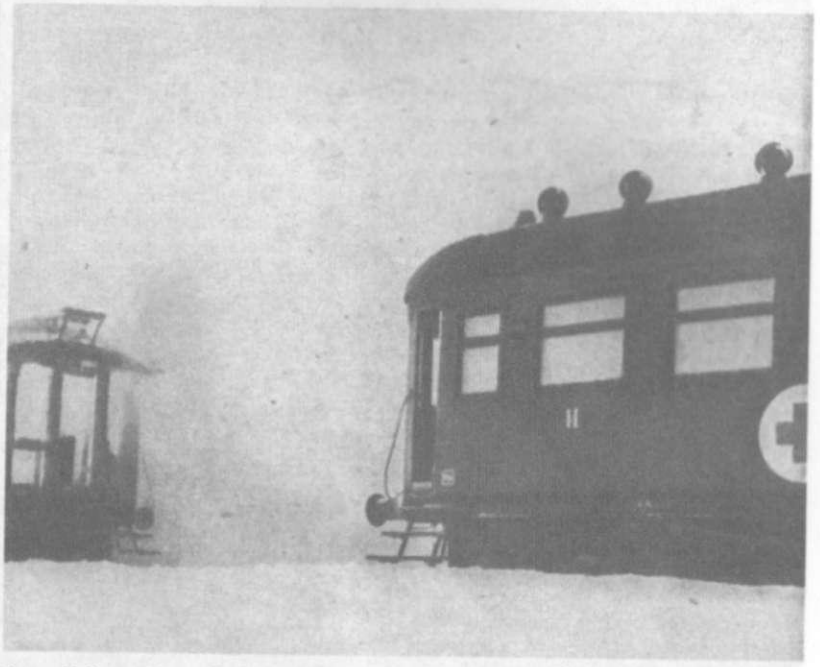
But there is a limit to human endurance, and it may be asked how long



The admittedly serious situation in the Karelian Isthmus at the time of the fighting described in this page is shown approximately in this map. The dotted area marks the general position of the Mannerheim zone before the Red onslaught; its precise situation has, of course, been shown on no large-scale map. In this map 1 inch equals 33 miles.

Such Deeds Would Once Have Put Savages to Shame

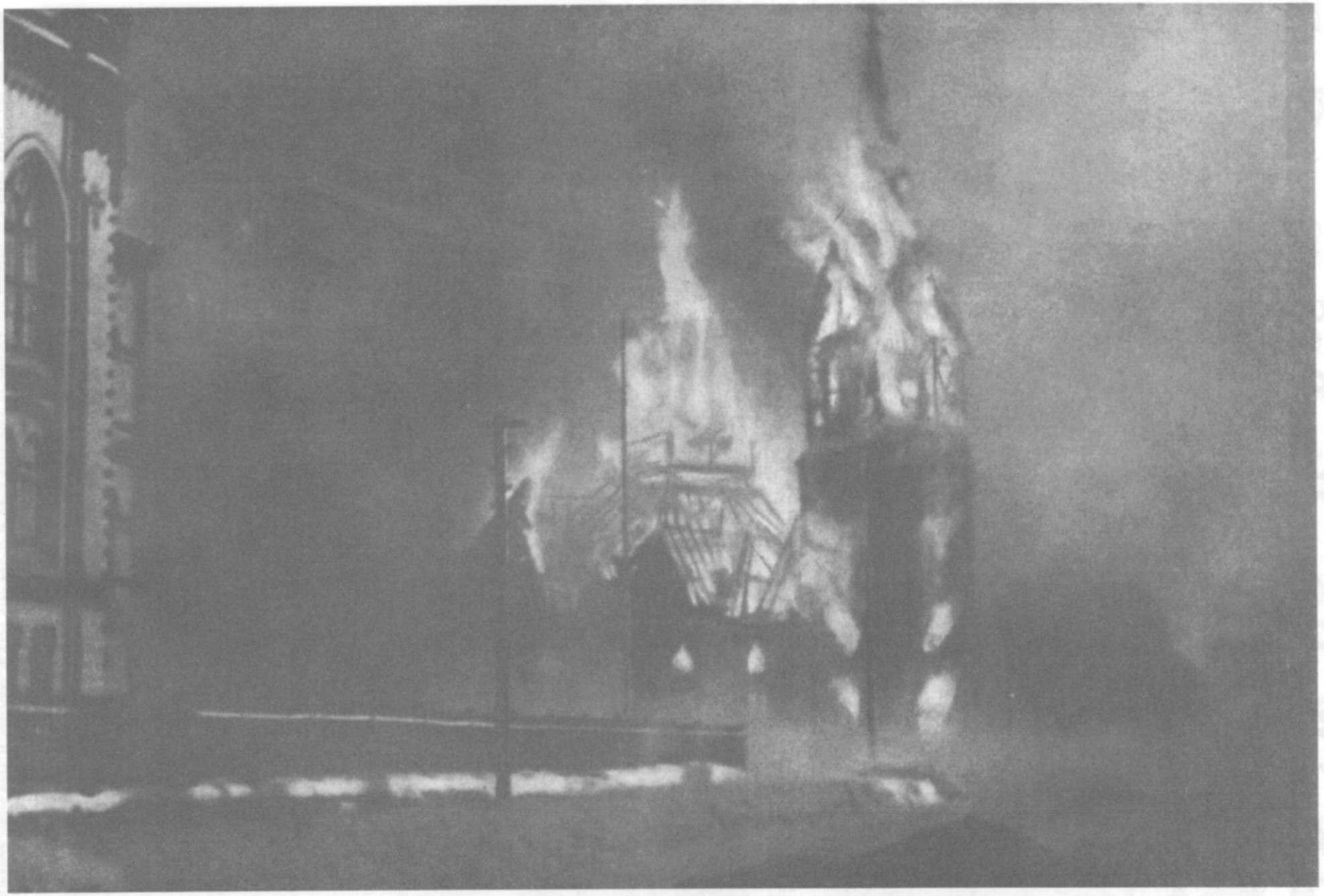




Left is a Finnish hospital that was bombed by Russians. On the roof of one wing, still standing, the Red Cross is painted, and it was equally visible on another wing destroyed by a direct hit. Right is an ambulance train, marked with the Red Cross, burning after being bombed by Soviet 'planes.
Photos, Associated Press

Amidst the terrible scenes of destruction that form the story of Finland today, it is still possible to see such pleasant sights as this. One of the "Lotta girls," that noble band of Finnish women whose work is described in page 619, Vol. I, is being serenaded by soldiers in gratitude for a good meal.
Photos, Associated Press and Fox

With almost incredible brutality Soviet bombers have returned to machine-gun those engaged in salvage work. For this reason Finnish firemen wear white camouflage.



While the Russian land forces were battering against the Mannerheim Line and making only small gains at a huge cost of men and material, the policy of endeavouring to subdue Finland by an intensive bombardment from the air, directed against both the civilian population and military objectives, went on with unabated fury. Here a church in Northern Finland is blazing after an incendiary bomb had been dropped on it. Soviet airmen, taught and perhaps helped by Nazis who gained their experience in Spain have dropped incendiary bombs on the outskirts of Finnish towns so that the fires caused might serve as beacon lights for following squadrons to drop high-explosive bombs on important objectives.

Photo, Fox

Finland Desperate but Valiant Calls for Help

Many men of the Scandinavian countries, realizing their own imminent peril if Russia were victorious, have volunteered for the Finnish Army. Mr. Axe Aspergren, a Swede, seen above, took with him his sledge and team of dogs, a valuable means of transport in a snow-bound country

the Finns will be able to continue their amazing stand. The Russian losses have been terrific in men and tanks and planes, but the commissars fling one and all into the fight with a careless abandon.

The Finns, on the other hand, are rich only in individual quality, and as yet they have received but inconsiderable reinforcements from outside. True, in February the British Government granted permission for British subjects to volunteer for service in Finland, and a number of Hungarians, Canadians and Italians had come or were coming to take their part in the Finnish war. Finland's appeal to Sweden for military aid, however, was definitely refused, the Swedish attitude being justified by King Gustav in the words that "if Sweden were to intervene in Finland we should run the greatest risk not only of being involved in war with Russia, but also in the war between the great Powers"—an obvious hint of the fear that if Sweden gave military assistance to Finland, then she would almost certainly be attacked by Germany.

But Finland is not defeated; as if to prove that her fighting spirit was undaunted by the Karelian Isthmus withdrawal, a day or two later her armies gave the coup de grâce to two Russian divisions, the 54th at Kuhmo and the 18th at Kitelae, north-east of Lake Ladoga, whose men had for days been slowly dying in the snows; and Russian claims to have captured the fortress island of Koivisto—a key point to Viipuri—were denied by the Finns, though apparently they had had to relinquish Koivisto town on the mainland. The Soviet advance permitted preparations to bombard Viipuri itself.

Anti-aircraft guns and men to man them are one of Finland's crying needs. These two Swedish volunteers are ready for the first Soviet 'plane that comes along.

Photos, L.N.A., Keystone and Wide World

This is what a Soviet bomber, unchallenged by fighter aircraft or defences, did to a small Finnish town. The wooden houses that are general in such towns are quickly burned out.

Vivid and Exclusive Account of

Recently returned from a visit to the war zone in Finland, Mr. E. G. Calcraft, Special Photographer of Planet News, Ltd., here gives, for the information especially of THE WAR ILLUSTRATED readers, a vivid account of some of his unpleasant experiences. Many of his remarkable photographs have been reproduced in these pages.

To secure his dramatic photographs of the war in Finland, Mr. Calcraft had to travel long distances on skis into parts of the battle zone.
Photos, Planet News

ONE of the first things I saw when I returned to England was a group of people staring up at aeroplanes engaged in a dog-fight over an East Coast town; they were treating the air-raid as if it were a circus. In Rovaniemi the first air-raid took place on January 31, when fifteen people were killed and forty-seven injured. In the second raid on February 1 only five people were killed and ten injured, probably because the people had realized that a raid was not a strange spectacle to be watched, but that they must take cover in the shelters as soon as the 'planes were reported to be approaching.

To be machine-gunned and endure hour after hour of shell-fire matters little—one gets used to it; but it is not so with bombing. Somehow one never gets used to being bombed; each attack only serves to heighten one's fear, and I must confess that I felt decidedly scared when the raids began. However, my job was to take pictures, and for this purpose it was no good going down into an air-raid shelter when the alarm sounded, so on the second day at Rovaniemi I lay in the snow looking up at the giant four-engined bombers over 12,000 feet above me, and hoped against hope that bombs had not been released.

This was not the case, however, and soon I heard a rushing sound like that of waves breaking over a sea-wall, the earth shook, and I felt the heat of the blast, while acid fumes made me cough. I stayed where I was, and as at Warsaw last September (*see* Volume I, page 253), wondered if I would get out alive. Seven bombs fell in my immediate neighbourhood, the nearest being only seven yards away. A soldier standing behind me was killed by this bomb, and I was told afterwards that I was saved by being actually under the arc of the bomb.

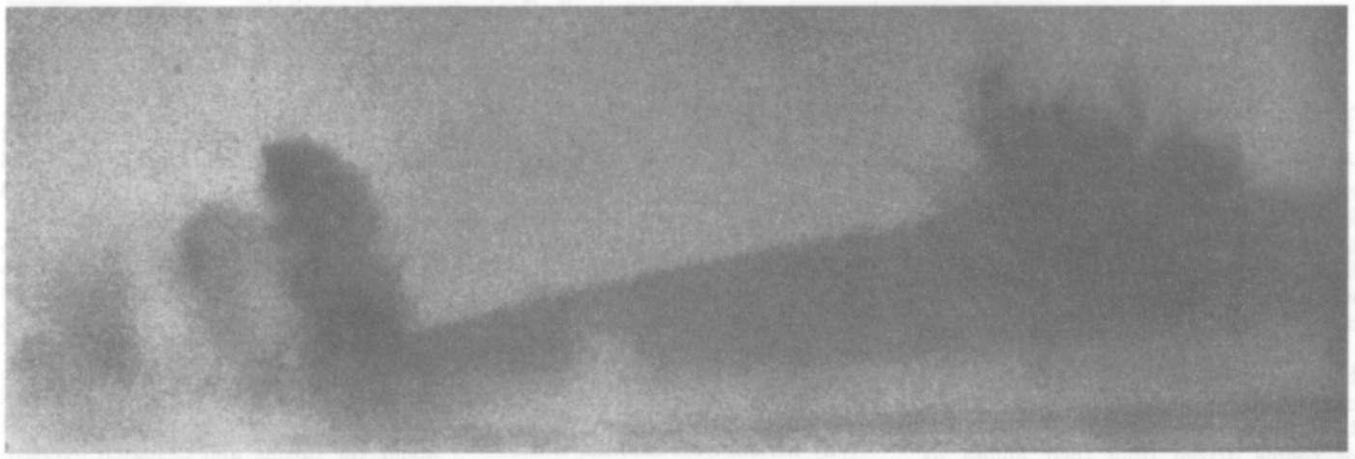
I decided to get out of the town, and had started to cross the lake when the bombers returned for a second attack. On the lake the ice was cut into big blocks ready to be stored for summer, and behind one of these I lay and cooled off while the bombing of the town continued.

The anti-aircraft guns threw up shell after shell, but the Red bombers flew on without wavering, as they were beyond the range of the guns. I quickly found that if a bomb is released immediately overhead there is little danger, but if it is dropped while the machine is still a distance away you must be ready to run in any direction. On this particular occasion 163 bombs were dropped, and not one of them outside the town area. The raiders hit everything they wanted from a height of 4,000 metres. The heaviest bomb weighed 1,000 lb., though the average was from 250 lb. to 750 lb. It was on this same day that twenty-five bombs fell round the hospital, and many other important buildings, including the governor's house, the military headquarters, and the power-station on the other side of the river were badly damaged. In the case of the power-station, one 'plane broke away from the main formation and delivered two bombs, the first of which registered a direct hit. All the same, there were an amazing number of duds dropped.

The Finnish people are carrying on their ordinary work as far as they

During the ruthless bombing of Rovaniemi, the town's best equipped hospital suffered severely; a nurse is here seen salvaging instruments from the devastated operating theatre. Huge 1,000-lb. bombs were used, and a Finnish officer is heaving the cap of one out of the comparatively small crater.

Camera Man's Nerve-Wracking Work in Finland



This extraordinary photograph of Soviet bombs bursting was not taken by Mr. Calcraft. He had set his camera for another subject when the bombs dropped nearby, and the violent concussion of the explosions operated the shutter. A Finnish soldier standing behind him was killed outright.

To prevent the possible spread of disease, Russian prisoners are given the Finnish "souna," or steam bath. Here are some of them in a bath-hut in the Salla sector.

possibly can. Of course, in the winter work on the farms ceases, but in the factories work is started at 1 o'clock in the morning and goes on until about 9 a.m., when the workers retire to the woods for the day, where they hope to be safe from the air-raids. This time-table is based on the fact that if the Russian 'planes leave their base about dawn, they arrive in Finland at 9.30 or 10.30 a.m.

Food, though plentiful enough, is limited in variety. There are no fresh vegetables, everything is tinned, and much reindeer meat is eaten. The Finnish soldiers eat chiefly stew, porridge, and plenty of bread; they are well looked after, and are finely equipped. Travelling is by sleigh drawn either by reindeer or by horses, though skis are necessary in order to go with the patrols.

The Finns are making increasing use of dogs for transport (many of them have been lent by the Swedish Government) and men from Alaska and the Yukon have come over to take charge of them. From Rovaniemi northwards you can travel by car along the Arctic highway towards Petsamo. I went on this fine road to Pelkosenniemi, near Kemijærvi, where the Finns wiped out a crack division of the Russian Army.

The Russian equipment appears to be very poor, and many of their cars and lorries are 1926 Fords. The Finns just ski down and throw grenades into the tractors. I saw many Russian prisoners, one of whom I asked where he was captured. He told me that it was 30 kilometres from Helsinki. I asked him why he thought this, and he said that his commissar had told him so. Actually, he was captured at Petsamo, some 700 miles to the north!

While the prisoners are bathing, their usually dirty and ragged uniforms are burnt outside the bath-hut, and clean outfits and food are prepared for them. Such treatment is a welcome shock to the Russians, whose political commissars have led them to believe that the Finns are bloodthirsty barbarians. *Photos, Planet News*

One day I was present when a party of Russian prisoners were given the "souna," or steam bath. The Russians were marched out of the town to the banks of the lake where the "souna" was situated, at 2.30 in the morning. When the prisoner leading the single file came up to the little low building he walked straight up to the wall, stood against it, and put his arms above his head with his fists clenched. He really thought that he was about to be shot! So difficult was it to persuade these poor fellows that they were not going to be hurt that a military policeman had to undress first to show them what they had to do. After the bath they were given towels and clean underclothes, and the man who had gone to the wall and put up his arms, on being given a clean shirt, kissed it.

The New Year I spent at General Wallenius' house; he is a great general and a fine man. A little later I was at Kemijærvi with Pekka Niemi, the famous skier, when three Russian 'planes came over. They did not see us because we had white clothes on.

The only outside assistance I saw came from the Swedish volunteers, of whom there are about 8,000. Many countries have sent huge supplies of medical goods and warm clothing, but more than anything else Finland wants 'planes. The people's morale is excellent, but six "fighters" would have saved Rovaniemi from the destruction that I saw. Fighter 'planes would make the turning point in the war.

Will It Always Be Quiet on the Western Front?

As spring draws near, the question of a March or April offensive becomes increasingly canvassed. In the contribution printed below we have an expression of the opinion that while the Allies need not attack on the Western Front, Hitler will similarly avoid challenging a decision on a field so unfavourable to the attacker.

HALF a year of war, and still on the Western Front it is so quiet as to be almost uncanny. "This war is phoney," an American journalist has said, and there is no need to attempt to English his adjective; to others nearer the actual scene it is queer and strange, while to those in the front line it is decidedly and definitely boring.

It is all so different from what people had expected before it began. Romancing experts had painted pictures of towns blasted to pieces by bombs, of multitudes of people driven from their homes by poison gas dropped from the sky, of great battles ranging over hundreds of miles in which thousands of tanks and 'planes and millions of men would be employed.

In front of the Maginot Line, little groups of French or British move out by day or by night into "No-Man's Land," and after patrolling a mile or two of wire-infested ground return to their trenches more than gratified if they can bring back with them a solitary German, alive or dead. There is no full blast of war's great organ, but just the splutter of machine-guns, the explosion of a grenade, the solitary crack of a rifle.

Putting aside the changes, dramatic and tremendous, that war may bring to other scenes of conflict, we may ask ourselves whether it will continue to be "All quiet on the Western Front" indefinitely—using Remarque's phrase as the expression of a patent fact.

An elementary principle of war is to attack the enemy at his weakest point; and who, then, if an alternative opening presented itself, would choose to make an assault on either of the "lines" of Maginot and Siegfried—lines which are no lines at all, but long stretches of country fortified to a immense depth by military engineers who are the Vaubans of the present age? In the great battles of the last war hundreds of thousands of men were killed or wounded in frontal assaults on fortified trench systems.

Why Britain Sent Another B.E.F.

Those lost legions of Britain's manhood have never been replaced. Britain was not bled white as France was said to have been bled white at Verdun, but so terrific were Britain's losses in the last war, that until even a year ago there were many who were ready to maintain that Britain should never even attempt to repeat her mighty effort of 1914–1918. Never again, they said, should we put an army of continental proportions into the field, but we should concentrate all our efforts on creating a navy and an air force second to none.

That was before Munich, however, and in the light of what was learnt then of Germany's preparedness, it was realized that the brunt of meeting the Nazi attack could not be left to France alone. So when war once again broke upon the world, while France mobilized the full power of her manhood, Britain set about the raising and despatch overseas of an army which should be no "token" force, but one of several millions strong.

The advance guard of that great host is now somewhere in France. It is splendidly armed and equipped, well led, and full of enthusiasm, but yet it has not been in action on the grand scale.

On the one hand there is no reason, so far as one can see, why Britain and France should run the risk of incurring those enormous losses which must accompany any attempt to take the Siegfried Line by storm. Every day that goes by sees an increase in the war strength of the Allies; in other words, it sees a diminution of the lead which Germany had secured by fair means and foul before the opening of the war. The Allies have no reason to complain if the war should develop into a condition of stalemate, so far as the Western Front is concerned. It has been said again and again that time is on our side, and that slowly but surely the blockade will bring Nazi Germany to her knees.

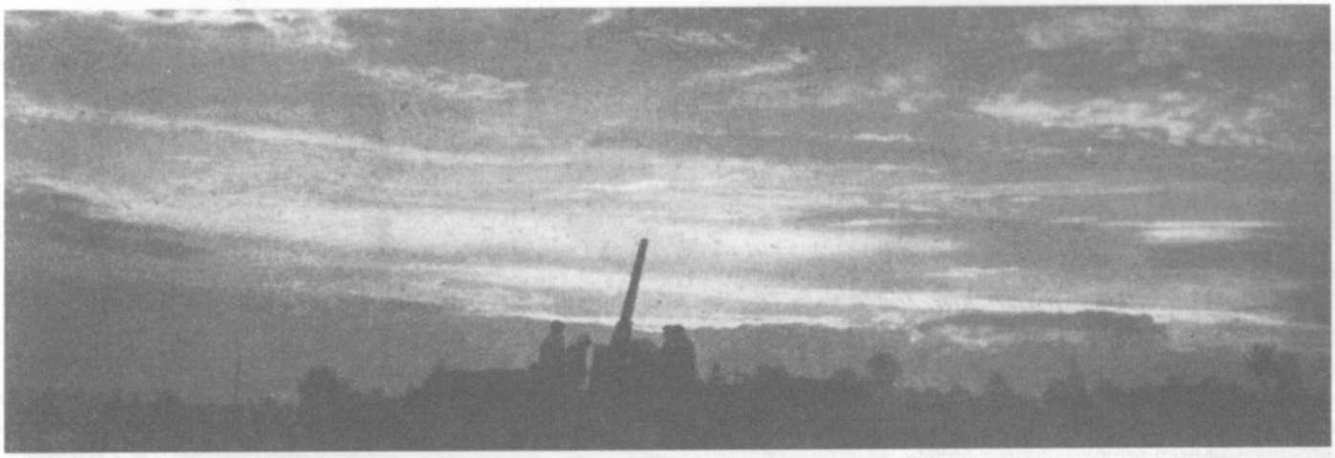
But Germany? Can Hitler afford to wait, to avoid much longer a tremendous thrust at his enemies, when the blockade is so surely sapping the foundations of his rule? Nowhere else—argue many military authorities—but on the West is a really decisive issue possible; neither on the ocean nor in the Baltic, neither in the Balkans nor in the East. So he toys with the idea of attacking the flank of the Maginot Line through Holland and Belgium, or through Switzerland. Well may we believe that he will choose anywhere but here for his "Blitzkrieg," here where millions of men lie entrenched around the thickly-massed guns.

Six months of warfare sufficed to prove that mechanized vehicles cannot entirely replace horses and mules for transport. India has already sent mule transport columns to France and now Cyprus has reinforced them. Here Cypriot volunteer muleteers are watering their charges soon after their arrival in France.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright.

Mr. Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for War, visited the B.E.F. in France in the middle of February and saw the defences built by the Pioneer Corps and Regular troops, including blockhouses and concrete pill boxes. He is here watching an excavator at work. Such machines, with other labour-saving devices, enabled the fortifications to be constructed with great rapidity.

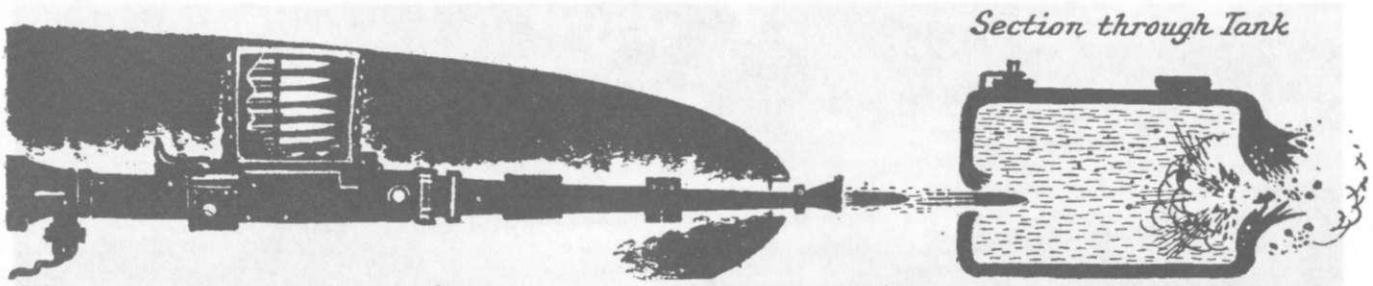
Beauty of Nature Still Unspoiled by War



While the Western Front is overshadowed by war the serene beauties of nature still remain to hold out hopes of a new and better world to come. In the top photograph, taken at sundown on the Western Front, only a gun silhouetted against the western sky, flecked with a pattern of clouds, recalls the grim realities of war. In the snowclad landscape of fairy-like beauty below, only a French patrol with its dogs suggests that even here guns may thunder.

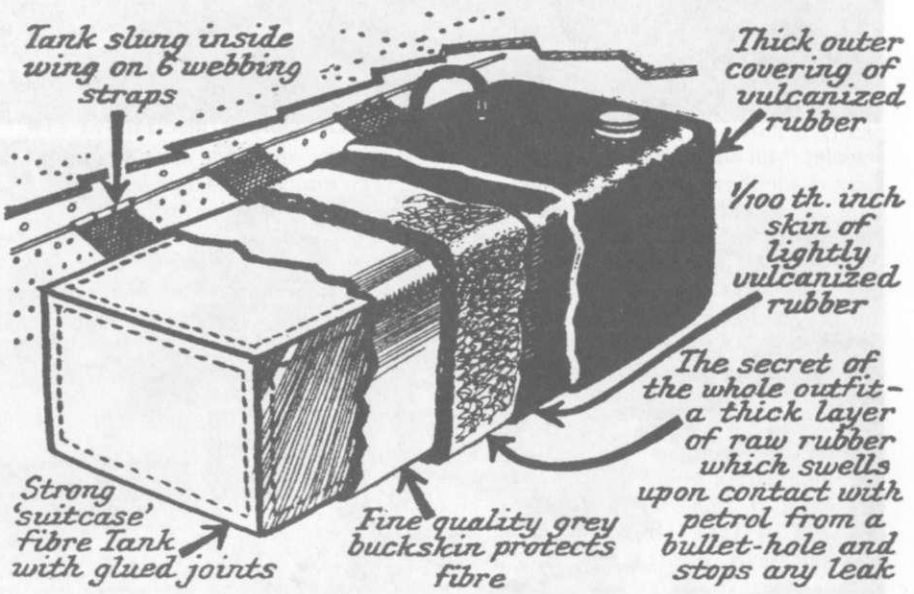
Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Topical

The Age-long Battle between Defence and Attack



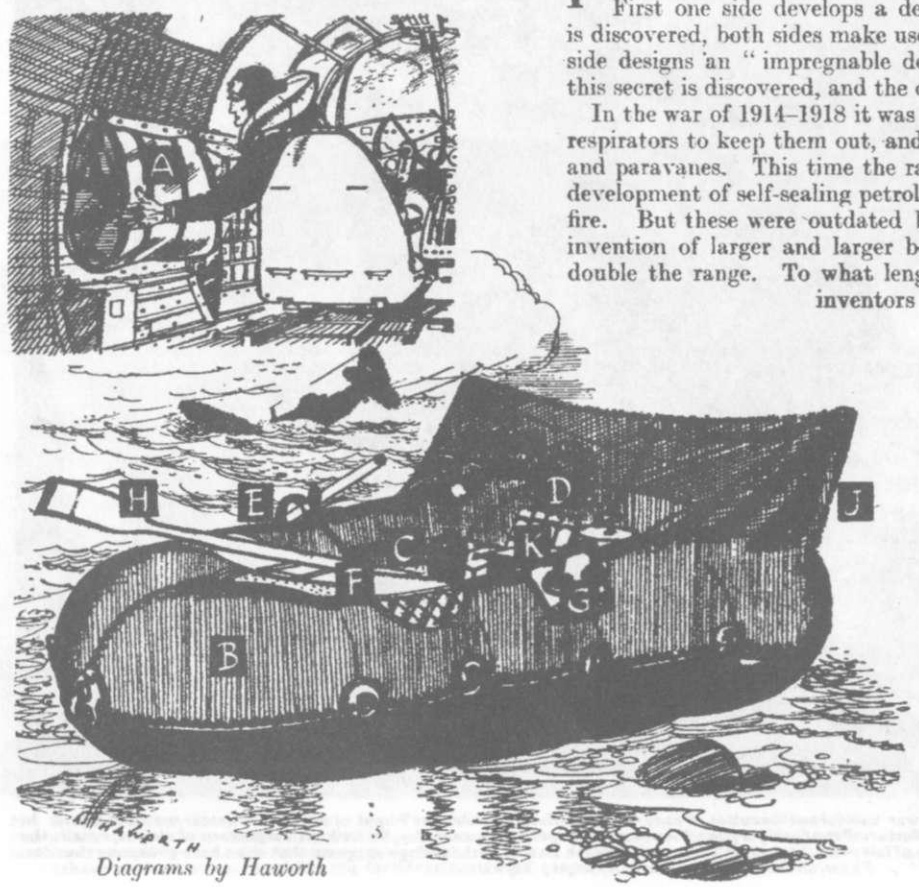
THE danger of a pierced petrol tank resulting in a stopped engine and a hopeless blaze whilst flying over enemy territory has been removed by the bullet-proof tank. The tank is not designed to withstand the impact of enemy bullets, but automatically seals itself when penetrated. The tank itself is made of fibre, protected by a layer of leather. Between this and two outer sheaths of vulcanized rubber is a thick layer of untreated rubber. Petrol from a leak coming in contact with this layer makes it swell and fill the hole completely. Germany has fitted these tanks to her machines, and the R.A.F. have bullet-proof, crash-proof and fire-proofed tanks.

But both the enemy and the Allies have developed guns firing ¼-lb. explosive shells at the rate of 300 a minute which will penetrate these tanks and destroy them.


Tank slung inside wing on 6 webbing straps
Thick outer covering of vulcanized rubber
1/100 th. inch skin of lightly vulcanized rubber
The secret of the whole outfit – a thick layer of raw rubber which swells upon contact with petrol from a bullet-hole and stops any leak
Strong 'suitcase' fibre Tank with glued joints
Fine quality grey buckskin protects fibre

IN war, as in peace, the race between attack and defence hastens ahead. First one side develops a devastating weapon of attack. The secret is discovered, both sides make use of it. Then, in the meantime, the other side designs an "impregnable defence" against this weapon. And later this secret is discovered, and the odds are evened up again.

In the war of 1914–1918 it was a case of deadlier poison gases and better respirators to keep them out, and also tanks and anti-tank guns, torpedoes and paravanes. This time the race is in the air, and has already seen the development of self-sealing petrol tanks that are proof against machine-gun fire. But these were outdated before the beginning of hostilities by the invention of larger and larger bore guns firing explosive shells at nearly double the range. To what lengths this race will lead the genius of our inventors none can foretell.



Diagrams by Haworth

DESIGNED to keep six people afloat, the inflatable rubber dinghy, carried as standard equipment by R.A.F. aeroplanes when working over the sea, can be stowed in a canvas bag, A, a little over a yard in diameter. When used in an emergency the oval buoyancy tubes, B, can be inflated with compressed air from the container, C, through valves, D, within 30 seconds.

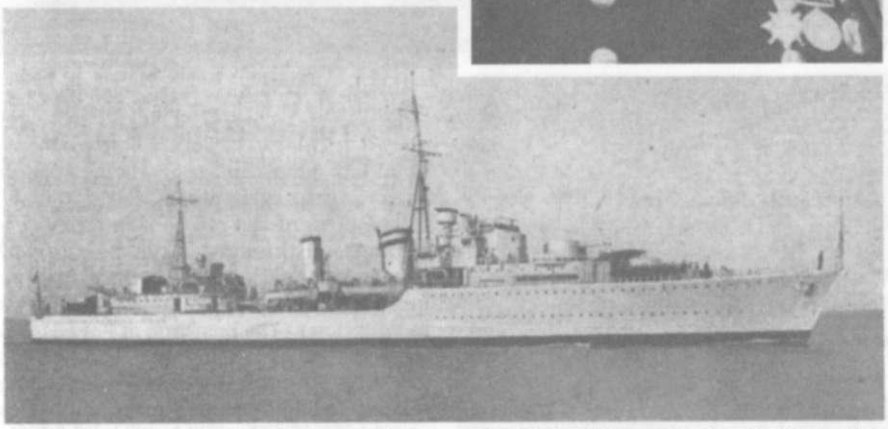
The rower braces his feet on a rope, E, as he sits on the canvas seat, F. Rowlocks, G, on specially strengthened pads, are provided for a pair of light oars, H. Protection from the weather is afforded by a canvas screen, J, and iron rations, flares, first-aid kit and compass are supplied. The weight of the whole outfit is only 56 lb.

Seaplanes carry larger dinghies with a sail to take twelve people.

The Nazi Slave-Ship Feels the Nelson Touch

Yet another dramatic chapter in the history of the British Navy was written when on February 16 H.M.S. "Cossack" pursued the Nazi slave-ship "Altmark" into a Norwegian fjord and rescued 299 British prisoners at the point of the bayonet. Below is a recapitulation of the episode based on Admiralty statements and eye-witness stories.

THE slave ship was almost home. Two months and more had passed since she parted company from the "Admiral Graf Spee" after receiving from the pocket battleship her last captures of British prisoners. That was on December 6, somewhere in the South Atlantic, and since then while the "Graf Spee" was resting and sinking ever deeper into the Montevidean sandbank, the "Altmark" had ploughed a zigzag course heading northward. She reached at last the cold waters of Iceland, and now turned south past the towering cliffs of Norway. On February 14 she got into Norwegian territorial waters off Trondheim Fjord and (according to the Norwegian Prime Minister) was stopped and "examined" by a Norwegian torpedo boat. She was allowed to continue her journey, but next day, 100 miles north of Bergen, was again stopped by a Norwegian warship, and refused a request that she should be searched. The afternoon of Friday, February 16, found her approaching Norway's southernmost point; a very short distance beyond lay the Skagerrak, safety, and home.



Captain P. L. Vian R.N., top centre, was in command of H.M.S. "Cossack" when the "Altmark" endeavoured to escape to a German port with her load of British prisoners. In the lower photograph is his ship, a destroyer of 1,870 tons, one of the Tribal class, and, like her sister ship the "Afridi," a flotilla leader. She was completed in June, 1938. *Photos, Wright & Logan and Topical*

Down below in the darkness and filth of the overcrowded "flats" the 299 British prisoners must have almost lost hope as from their single peephole they watched the cliffs of Norway sail past, and heard blocks of ice crunching against the ship's side; on the bridge Captain Dau, a hard-bitten old Nazi, was no doubt congratulating himself that he had managed to evade the Allied patrols and that very shortly he would see on the horizon the squadrons of Nazi 'planes which were to escort him to port in triumph.

But the British Admiralty decreed otherwise. Ever since that glorious day in December when they had driven the "Graf Spee" into Montevideo the Royal Navy had been maintaining a constant watch for her auxiliary of evil repute, and now were close on her trail. It was an aircraft of Britain's coastal command that first spotted the "Altmark" as she crept past the Norwegian coast; for hours her commander had been sweeping the seas with his binoculars when he saw a smudge of smoke below him. He dived down to investigate, only to find to his intense disappointment that the ship was not the "Altmark." Just about to turn away for home he suddenly noticed that there was another ship in the near neighbourhood, the ship which—yes, it had its funnel far aft. It was the "Altmark"! Almost at the same moment two more British 'planes sighted the ship.

Swiftly the discovery was signalled to the Fleet, and in a very short time "certain of His Majesty's ships," to quote the dry phrasing of the Admiralty statement, "which were conveniently disposed rushed up at full speed." Leading the chase was the destroyer "Cossack" which at once attempted to head off the "Altmark," but the German steamer slipped into the little Joessing Fjord. Then the "Cossack" turned and made for the entrance of the fjord into which her quarry had disappeared. The destroyer "Ivanhoe" was already there, together with two Norwegian gunboats who apparently had been escorting the "Altmark" along the coast.

The captain of one of the gunboats came aboard the "Cossack" and Captain Vian, who, meanwhile, had received instructions from the Admiralty, offered to place a joint British and Norwegian guard upon the "Altmark," and to escort her with British and Norwegian warships to Bergen where the search for the British prisoners could be conducted and the matter properly investigated according to international law. The Norwegian captain, however, refused; he declared that the "Altmark" was unarmed, that he knew nothing about any prisoners on board, that she had been examined at Bergen the day before and had received permission to use Norwegian territorial waters on her passage to Germany.

Although far from satisfied with these assurances the British destroyers withdrew and again got in touch with the Admiralty. It was not long before further instructions were received; in effect, Captain Vian was told to go in and get the prisoners.

It was now 7.30 or 8 o'clock in the evening and quite dark when H.M.S. "Cossack" headed for the entrance to the fjord. Gliding by the two Norwegian gunboats at the entrance, the British destroyer, with her searchlights blazing, crunched her way through the ice towards where the "Altmark" was silhouetted against the thousand-foot-high cliffs. On entering Captain Vian (in command of the flotilla) went on board the Norwegian boat "Kjell" and again asked that the "Altmark" should be taken to Bergen with a joint Anglo-Norwegian guard. The commanding officer of the Norwegian warship refused the request, although he

The scene of the remarkable exploit of H.M.S. "Cossack" is shown in this map. By it can be followed the course the "Altmark" would pursue to reach Germany through neutral waters. *"Daily Telegraph"*

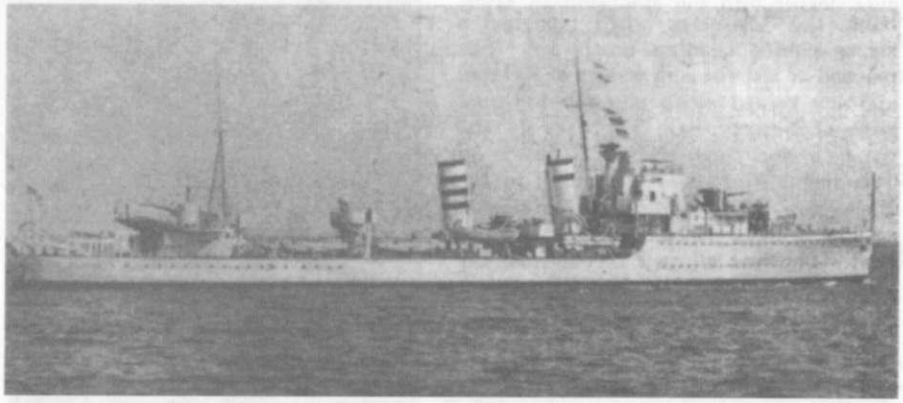
'It Was a Good Scrap While It Lasted'

agreed to take passage in the "Cossack" until her men boarded the "Altmark" when he declared that he had not come to look on at a fight and returned to his own ship.

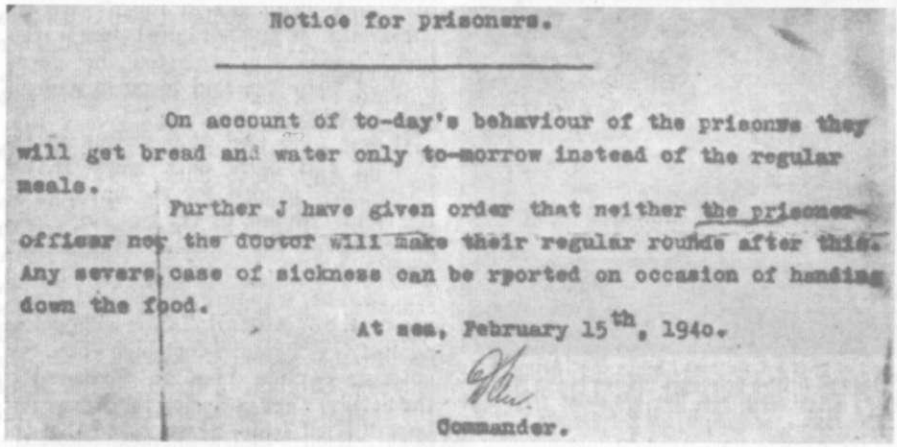
Meanwhile the "Altmark" which was jammed in the ice in the inner end of the fjord began to work her engines, and in spite of an order to stop, broke free and attempted to ram the "Cossack" as the destroyer came alongside. The only result of the manoeuvre, however, was the grounding of the "Altmark" herself by the stern. The two ships were now only about 8 feet apart and grappling irons were at once thrown out from the "Cossack," and a boarding-party leaped the gap and drove the German crew before them. For a few minutes hand-to-hand fighting was going on in many parts of the ship and the Germans suffered casualties amounting to seven dead and several wounded. The only British casualty was Mr. J. J. F. Smith, gunner in charge of one of the boarding parties who was severely wounded.

Some of the Germans jumped overboard and ran across the ice and opened fire with rifles on the ship from a small eminence. The fire was returned by the British and two Germans who were scrambling across the ice were hit. Another fell into the water, whereupon two of the "Cossack's" officers plunged in and brought him aboard. It was found that he had been severely wounded and he died later in the ship's hospital.

By now the prisoners in the "Altmark" were being liberated: members of the boarding-party tried every door and hatchway, shouting "The Navy is here!" The answer was a roar of cheering, and in a few minutes the holds had been broken open and the prisoners, many of whom had not seen the daylight for the last fortnight, ran on deck, where they were passed on to the waiting destroyers. When the boarding party were satisfied that every prisoner had been released they withdrew and shortly afterwards the "Cossack" joined the rest of the British forces waiting outside the fjord. On the afternoon of the next day 299 deliriously happy seamen were landed at Leith and in a few hours most of them were on their way to their homes.



H.M.S. "Intrepid," whose captain is Commander R. C. Gordon, R.N., was the first British ship to intercept the "Altmark" as she made for Joessing Fjord. She is a destroyer of 1,370 tons. Completed in July 1937.



Notice for prisoners.

On account of to-day's behaviour of the prisoners they will get bread and water only to-morrow instead of the regular meals.

Further I have given order that neither the prisoner-officer nor the doctor will make their regular rounds after this. Any severe case of sickness can be reported on occasion of handing down the food.

At sea, February 15th, 1940.

Commander.

This notice was torn down from the prisoners' quarters in the "Altmark," after the ship had been duly dealt with, and one of them brought it away with him. It records the brutal Nazi punishment for their attempt to break away from unendurable conditions. Thanks to the British Navy this punishment never fulfilled its brutal intent.

The news of the rescue was received in Britain and throughout the Empire with tremendous enthusiasm. Germany, for her part, lost no time in expressing her indignation at the boarding of "a peaceful German merchantman" in neutral waters, and the "brutal murder" of German seamen, while Norway's reactions can be summed up in the words with which the Norwegian Prime Minister greeted the British Minister in Oslo: "I have asked you to come to express the strong consternation and indignation that we feel at this gross violation of Norwegian terri-

E.— HAMLET OF TINY STONE HOUSES SHOWING LIGHTED WINDOWS
D
A
B
C
A.- ALTMARK
B.- H.M.S. COSSACK laid Alongside.
C.- PACK ICE FLOES. SIX INCHES THICK IN FIORD.
D.- SKY STEEL BLUE - STARS OUT - NORTHERN TWILIGHT NOT ENTIRELY DARK
LOFTY SNOW CAPPED MOUNTAINS DROPPING SHEER INTO FIORD.

The sketch left was drawn by Thomas Aubrey Jenkins, one of the prisoners in the "Altmark." The position of the German prison-ship and H.M.S. "Cossack" at the time of the rescue is shown. Right is Joessing Fjord where the action took place. *Photo, L.N.A.*

The Captives Were Freed at the Bayonet Point

When the news was received that the "Cossack" was approaching Leith, every preparation was made to deal with the sick and wounded, and doctors, nurses, stretcher bearers and ambulance men were despatched from Edinburgh. They are here seen waiting to deal with the casualties as the "Cossack" came to her berth. *Photo, Topical*

STORY OF THE 'ALTMARK'S' FIVE-MONTH VOYAGE

From the Log kept by Seaman Swaby

Oct. 5.—Crew of 34 captured by "Admiral Graf Spee."
Oct. 7.—S.S. "Ashlea" caught and sunk. Crew of 35 put aboard.
Oct. 8.—"Newton Beach" sunk. Both crews put aboard "Graf Spee."
Oct. 10.—S.S. "Huntsman" caught.
Oct. 17.—S.S. "Huntsman" sunk and crew of 84 put aboard tanker.
Oct. 18.—"Newton Beach" and "Ashlea" crews put aboard tanker and find she is "Altmark" of Hamburg.
Oct. 21.—M.V. "Trevanion" sunk. Crew aboard "Graf Spee."
Oct. 28.—"Graf Spee" bunkered by tanker, and crew of "Trevanion" put aboard. Total prisoners, 186.
Nov. 28.—"Graf Spee" back. Stored and took aboard captains, first and second mates, chiefs and seconds.
Dec. 6.—"Graf Spee" back with crews. 150 from "Doric Star" and "Tairoa," sunk on Dec. 1 and 3. Total prisoners aboard now more than 300.
Dec. 16.—Name of tanker changed to "Haugsund."
Dec. 17.—Ship painted grey. Name changed to "Chirqueue."
Jan. 22.—Left on mad run up north on zigzag course.
Feb. 14.—Made Norse port. Believe Bergen. Our look-out very small hole, vision limited. Attempt break out. Failed.
Feb. 15.—Left port. Stopped by Norwegian destroyers. No search of ship. Made all the noise possible, whistling and sending out S O S calls on officers' whistles.
Feb. 16.—Bread and water for attempts to escape. Tea-time our look-outs believe we have been stopped by one of our 'planes.
Still battened down. Waiting daylight to see what happens.
An hour later Seaman Swaby and his companions were aboard the "Cossack."

torial waters . . . we cannot doubt that the British Government will give full satisfaction at once."

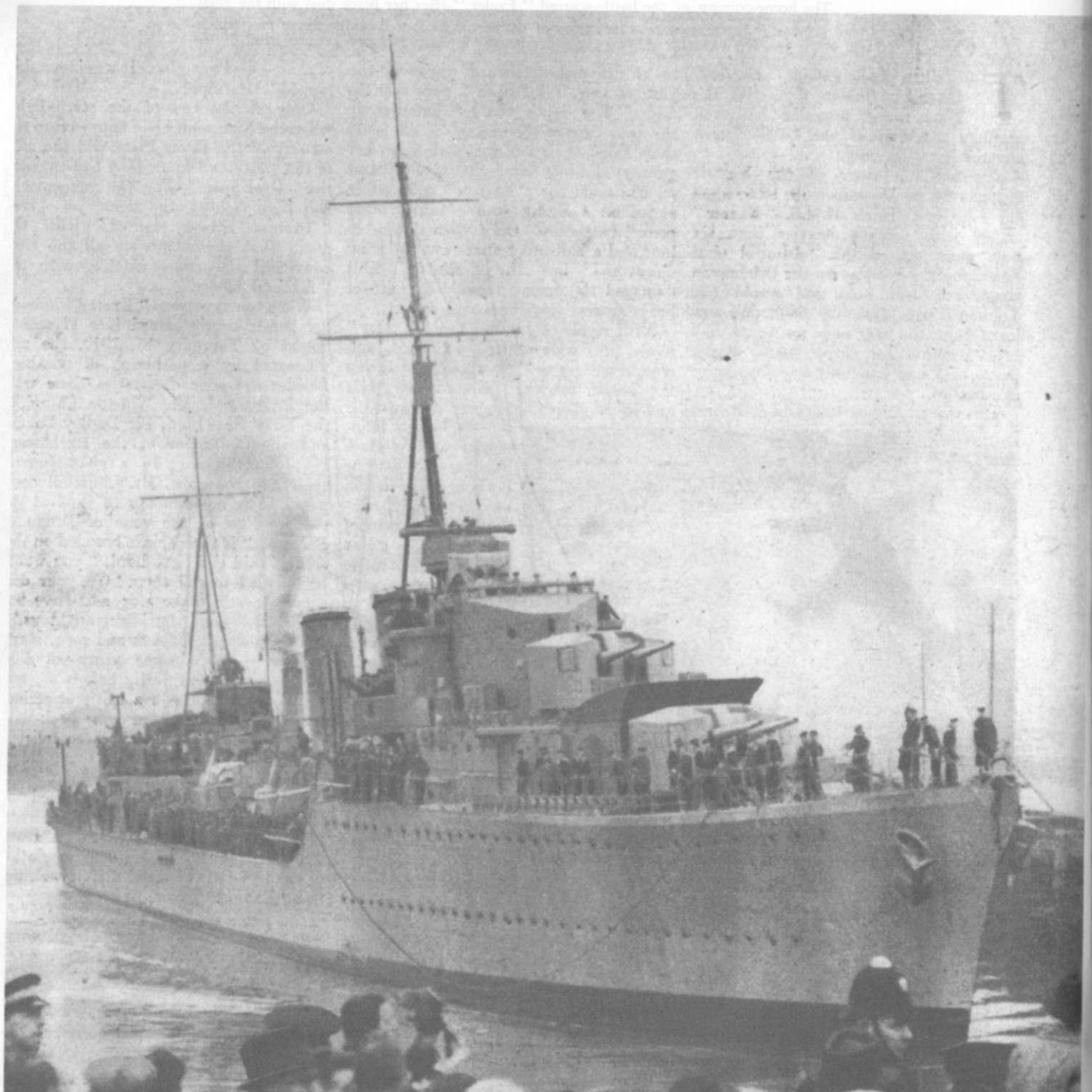
The British Government were as unperturbed by Norway's protests as by Germany's screamings. They at first complained of the "perfunctory manner" in which the vessel had been searched, but it was later admitted by Norway that, owing to the "Altmark's" status as a German warship, she had not in fact been searched. On February 20 Mr. Chamberlain stated that the Norwegian Government's interpretation of international law would legalize abuse of neutral waters by German warships, and that Norway's "indifference" was not consistent with neutral obligations to Britain as a belligerent; it would create a position which the British Government could in no circumstances accept.

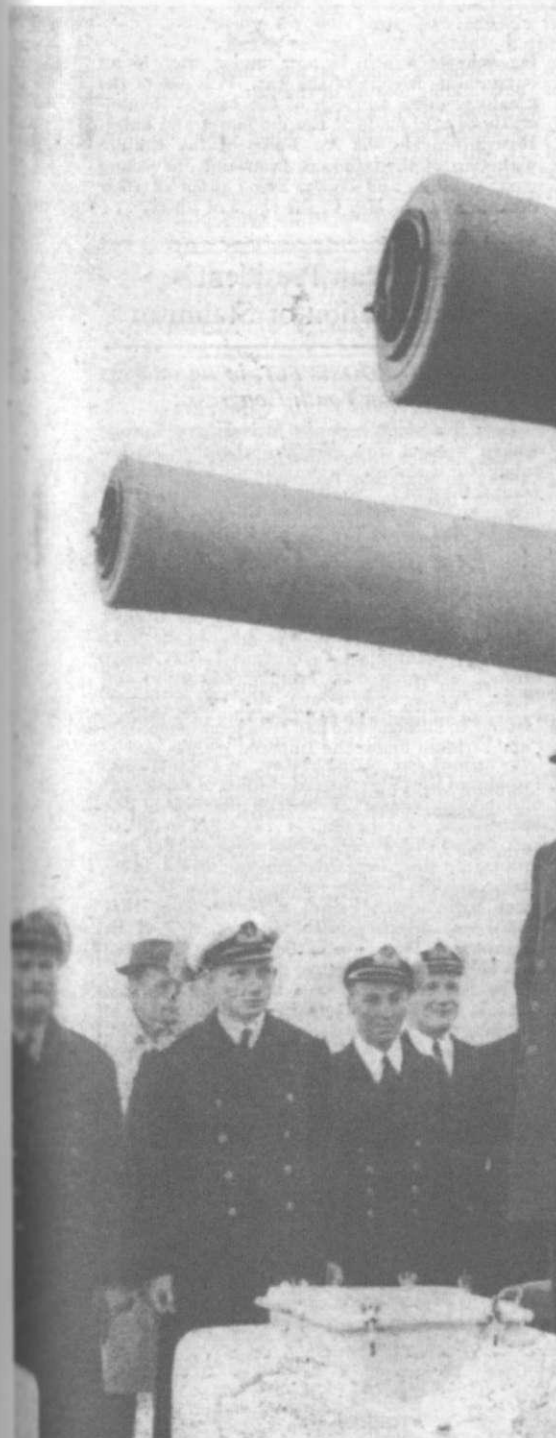
This question of the use of neutral territorial waters by Germany seemed likely to provoke a stormy controversy. Even in Scandinavian circles there was some misgiving about tolerating the abuse of neutrality by a nation which had deliberately sunk so many Norwegian and Swedish merchant ships. Opinion in the United States was frankly enthusiastic in support of Britain's action.

The brief but splendid saga of Joessing Fjord was complete—the "Nelson touch" had once again triumphed.

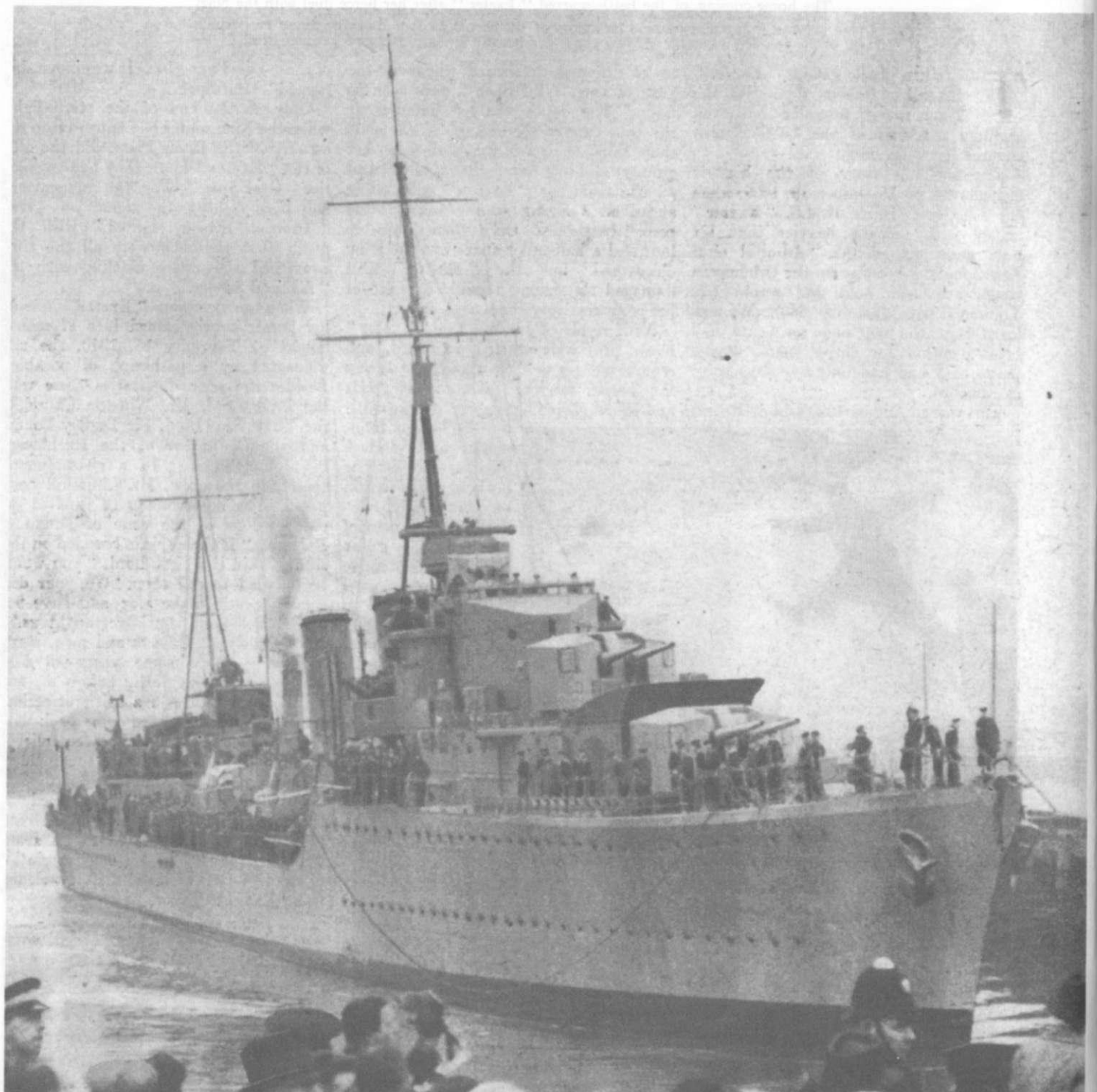
This group of men rescued from the "Altmark" was photographed after they had landed at Leith, looking dishevelled and ill. In the centre foreground one of them proudly sports a German sailor's cap that had been lost by one of the German seamen in the hand-to-hand fighting that took place when the "Cossack's" men boarded the German ship. *Photo, Keystone*

Gallant Sequel to Glorious Sea Affair—'Cossack' and 'Exeter' are Home, 'H





Gallant Sequel to Glorious Sea Affair—'Cossack' and 'Exeter' are Home, '



WORDS THAT HISTORY WILL REMEMBER

Extracted from Authoritative War Speeches and Statements Week by Week

(*Continued from page 146*)

War and Peace Aims of British Labour

Thursday, February 8, 1940

BRITISH LABOUR PARTY, in a declaration of policy :

The Allies' war purpose must be to defeat Hitlerism and to undo the wrongs resulting from Nazi aggression without creating new wrongs. It must be shown beyond all doubt that we shall not allow aggression to succeed. Victory for democracy must be achieved, either by arms or economic pressure, or—better still—by a victory of the German people over the Hitler regime, resulting in the birth of a new Germany.

The Labour Party is convinced that the Allies ought not to enter into peace negotiations, except with a German Government which has not merely promised, but actually performed, certain acts of restitution. In view of the experience of recent years, no one can trust a Nazi Government honestly to perform such acts, or to abstain from future aggression.

In reply to the just claim of the French, the Labour Party answers :

We share your determination that this recurrent German menace, requiring these repeated mobilizations of the whole manhood of France, shall not plague your next generation and ours, if our strength and foresight can prevent it. Henceforth, in resistance to any German aggression, our two peoples must be not merely allies for a season, but brothers for all time.

In reply to the Germans the Labour Party would say :

We are opposed to any attempt from outside to break up Germany. We do not seek the humiliation or dismemberment of your country. We wholeheartedly desire to welcome you without delay into the peaceful collaboration of civilized nations. We must warn you, however, that Hitler and his system prepared and started this war. He could not continue if you ceased supporting him. Until this accursed Nazi regime is overthrown there is no hope of peace between us. But if you establish a Government sincerely willing that Germany shall be a good neighbour and a good European, there shall be no humiliation nor revenge.

History teaches that any attempt to keep Germany an outcast after this war, or to deprive her of such security as her neighbours rightly claim for themselves, will fail. The most far-sighted and least dangerous policy is to seek to win the co-operation, as an equal partner, of a Germany governed by a political system whose aims and needs run parallel with ours.

"Keen-eyed and Swift-winged Knights of the Air"

Saturday, February 10

SIR KINGSLEY WOOD, Air Minister, in a speech at Bristol :

What of the Royal Air Force ? At the supreme hour of victory in the last great war King George V sent an historic message to all ranks of the Royal Air Force. He recalled how our aircraft had ever been in the forefront of the battle, and referred to their pilots as the keen-eyed and swift-winged knights of the air, who had given the world a new type of daring and resourceful heroism.

The men of the Royal Air Force today are the worthy successors of those men. Now, as then, amongst their ranks are the finest airmen in the world. Many of the Royal Air Force have already given a great and gallant account of themselves in combat with the Germans.

Those who have not as yet engaged in battle exist in what can only be described as a state of "exasperated anticipation"—always on their toes and desperately keen to take their full part for liberty and freedom.

As regards results in actual combat, it is not surprising—at any rate to us—that that part of our Air Force which has been engaged in pitched battles with the enemy has shot down many more enemy aircraft than we have lost . . .

The toll our airmen take is often much heavier than official reports can of necessity reveal. Many of the enemy machines our airmen have damaged, we find later, never reach Germany. The rubber boats containing the crews of German aircraft which reach our shores, and the bodies of German airmen washed up on the coast, bear their own witness that, despite the German "tip and run" tactics, heavier casualties are inflicted than are generally appreciated.

The work of the Coastal Command, in its daily sweeps to the farthest limits of the North Sea, and its close and hourly co-operation with the Royal Navy in the work of convoy escort and anti-submarine patrol, deserves all praise. During the Arctic weather of January aircraft of the Coastal Command flew close on a million miles.

I think we can confidently say that Europe's recent great freeze-up has shown that our air personnel are pretty weatherproof. The first half of January provided the most severe flying weather ever known. Yet throughout the bitter spell not a single day's halt was called in the vital work of the Coastal Command.

The ceaseless hunt for U-boats and for mines went on. Our records show that during all this trying period submarines were sighted and bombed, enemy aircraft were shot down or driven off, mines were destroyed, convoys escorted, and "leave ships" accompanied safely to port.

The Empire in this war, as in the last has sent us some of the finest airmen in the world. In recent exploits of gallantry and skill the pilots and airmen from our Dominions and Colonies have made a remarkable contribution.

I often think that the great Empire air training scheme which is now under way is an outstanding feature of the war. It is one of the greatest efforts and one of the biggest demonstrations ever made of Empire power and unity. It will provide the Air Force of the Empire with tens of thousands of keen and fine young men as pilots and crews, living proof of their devotion and loyalty to the cause of liberty . . .

American President's Condemnation of Stalinism

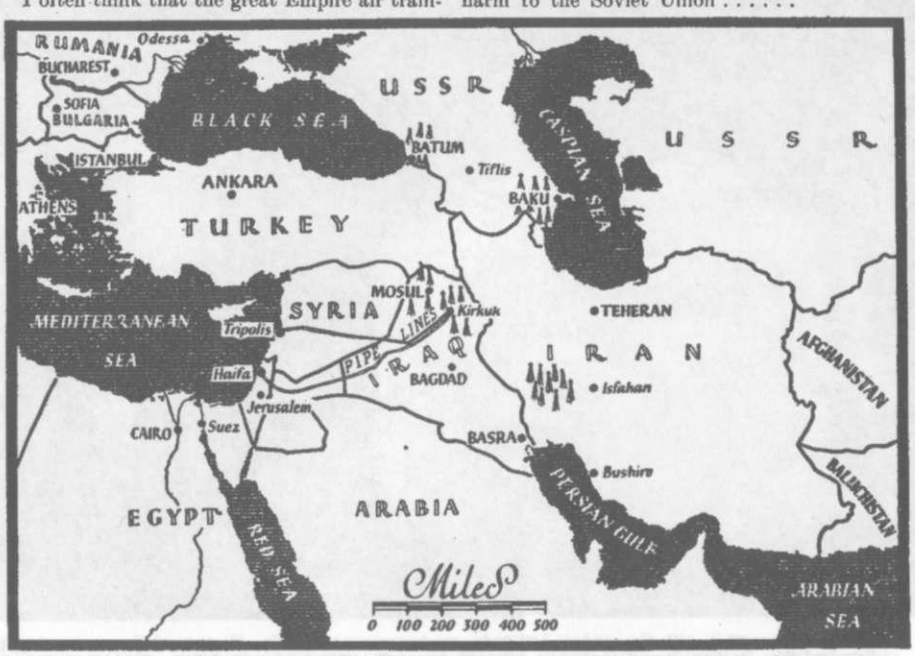
PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, in an address to the American Youth Congress :

Here is a small republic in Northern Europe which, without any question whatever, wishes solely to maintain its territorial and Governmental integrity. Nobody with any pretence of common sense believes that Finland had any ulterior designs on the integrity and security of the Soviet Union. That American sympathy is 98 per cent with the Finns in their efforts to stave off invasion by now is axiomatic.

More than 20 years ago I had the utmost sympathy with the Russian people. In the early days of Communism I recognized that many leaders in Russia were bringing education and better health and, above all, better opportunity to millions who had been kept in ignorance and serfdom under the Imperial régime.

I disliked the regimentation of Communism, I abhorred the indiscriminate killing of thousands of innocent victims, I heavily deprecated the banishment of religion. . . . I, with many of you, hoped that Russia would work out her own problems ; that her Government would eventually become a peace-loving, popular Government with a free ballot, a Government that would not interfere with the integrity of its neighbours. That hope is today either shattered or is held in storage against some better day.

The Soviet Union, as a matter of practical facts, is run by dictatorship—a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world. It has allied itself with another dictatorship and it has invaded a neighbour so infinitesimally small that it could do no conceivable possible harm to the Soviet Union . . . . . .



In this wide area of the Near and Middle East possible strategical developments of the greatest importance have, as indicated in the opposite page, attracted attention since the concentration of Allied troops in Egypt, Syria and Palestine. *Courtesy of "News Chronicle"*

If War Comes to Middle East

News of the arrival of the Anzacs in Egypt has concentrated attention on the Near and Middle East as a possible theatre of war. Below we give an account of the situation, political and military, as it appears at the moment.

General Weygand, in command of the French Force in the Near East, in conversation with Lieut.-General Sir A. Wavell, who commands the British Force in the Middle East. They are at the parade of Anglo-Egyptian troops near Cairo. *Photo, Associated Press*

AFTER an uneventful journey of nearly 10,000 miles the first contingents of the Second Australian Imperial Force and of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force landed in Egypt on February 12. Given an official welcome by Mr. Eden, the Secretary of State for the Dominions, they proceeded to cantonments which had been provided for them.

Twenty-five years had passed since the first Anzacs had arrived at the same spot, but that quarter of a century had worked many changes in the political scene. When they arrived off Suez in 1914 Turkey was the principal enemy, and the advance guard of her army was holding positions within a few miles of the Canal, while the whole of Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia (now Irak) and Arabia were within the Sultan's dominions.

Palestine, which the first Anzacs fought so hard to win, provides camps for their successors; Syria is a mandate of France; Irak is independent under British protection, and Arabia, too, is ruled by her own princes. There is still a Turkey, but it is a Turkey confined within racial and linguistic boundaries—and so far from being an enemy, she is our firm ally.

Long before the Anzacs arrived the Allies had been building up large armies in the Near and Middle East under the command of General Weygand and Lt.-Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell. The French forces alone have been stated unofficially to number between 150,000 and 400,000 men, and according to rumours which have been circulated in Germany and Russia the Allies now have available in this possible theatre of tomorrow's war a million men. This figure includes the growing Egyptian Army, which in the event of hostilities would be used for home defence purposes only. Throughout the countries of the Levant, indeed, war preparations are proceeding on an immense scale, and it is at least possible that it is here, or at least in the adjoining Balkans, that the spring offensive may have its scene instead of on the immensely strong Western Front.

A mechanized unit of the British Army drawn up for the inspection by General Weygand on February 8. The line of vehicles extended for a mile and a half.

King Farouk of Egypt is keenly interested in his army. He is here watching through sun glasses the shooting for the Egyptian Rifle Championship. With him is the Egyptian Minister of National Defence.
Photos, Keystone and Associated Press

In the first place we may suppose an attack by Germany, with or without Russian support, on Rumania for the sake of her oil. Such an attack might have been tempting up to a few weeks ago, but the possible aggressors are likely to think again when they know of the existence of this vast Allied army only a few hundred miles away across the Black Sea. When in 1915 the first Anzacs arrived off the Dardanelles they had to fight every inch of their way, but in 1940 they would find the Straits open wide before them and the British Fleet, with the full support of the Turkish authorities, waiting to escort them to the Rumanian coast. War against Rumania would be worth while only if Rumania's oil supplies might be seized with but little fighting, but this would most certainly not be the case if a strong force of Anzacs were already in the field.

Although it may not seem probable, it is at least possible that Soviet Russia, with German support or at Germany's instigation, might deliver an attack on those oilfields in Irak on which Britain and France are so largely dependent. It it true that Irak is a neutral, but so, too, was Finland. Here again the admirably placed Allied army in the Near East is likely to be a deterring force.

For the time being, at least, Soviet Russia has her hands full with Finland, and until that affair is liquidated she can have small wish to engage in any offensive operations against the Allies.

If, indeed, a state of war were to be declared between Britain and France on the one hand and Russia on the other, then it is more probable that it would be the Allies who would do the attacking. The most important of the Russian oilfields are at Baku and Batum, in the Caucasus, and it is not too much to say that they would be at the complete mercy of bombing 'planes proceeding from our aerodromes in Irak and Syria.

That such an attack is feared in Russia is evidenced by the reports that Stalin is fortifying his Black Sea ports. Other reports suggested a future Soviet threat to Iran. The most vital of Russia's industries might easily be crippled or even destroyed by such attacks on them, with results which would be disastrous, not only to Russia but to Germany.

All this, however, is so much speculation. What is certain is the readiness of the Allies in the Near and Middle East for any and every emergency.

From 'Down Under' Come Aussies & Anzacs with the

Australia is justly proud of her young sons who have volunteered to fight for the Empire and feels that nothing is too good for them. Each of the young "diggers," left, embarking to go overseas, carries a white linen bag containing gifts from the Australian Comforts Fund. Australian nurses, too, have volunteered for service, and below some of them are seen at the rail of a transport with the captain. Centre, men of the 2nd A.I.F., carrying full equipment, are lined up waiting to embark.

Photos, Commonwealth Department of Information

The people of New Zealand, like those of Australia, had an opportunity to give the young men who formed the first New Zealand contingent a hearty send-off. Left is their last march through Christchurch before embarking for Egypt.

The Anzac troops in this war, as in the last one, are admirably equipped. This quarter-master-sergeant at a camp in New Zealand proudly exhibits boots that are just the thing for foot-slogging in all weathers.

Photos, Keystone and Sport & General

'Bravest Message that the Nation's Power Can Give'

Mr. Anthony Eden, who flew to Egypt to welcome the troops from Australia and New Zealand on their arrival at Suez on February 12, carried messages to them from the King. He is here seen on the deck of one of the great liners that brought the troops to Egypt addressing the New Zealanders. The strategic significance of these troop movements is discussed in page 179. By their action in crossing the seas, he said, they had sent "the bravest message that the nation's power can give." *Photo, P.N.A.*

Making Munitions is a Wartime Job for Women

Speaking at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, on January 27, Mr. Winston Churchill said that a million women must come boldly forward into our war industry. Thus in 1940 Britain's women will be called upon to repeat that industrial effort which, as mentioned below, played so large a part in the winning of the victory of 1918.

IN this war, as in the last, they have their place in Britain's munitions works—the women and girls in drab cloaks of thick, undyed woollen cloth, with berets of the same material on their heads and thick rubber goloshes on their feet. They put in a full day's work at jobs which are not only hard and monotonous, but oftentimes dangerous; that is why they are forbidden to wear corsets or suspenders with metal clips or any kind of jewellery, for a spark struck from a piece of metal might blow the works sky-high.

Here is "Mary Bull," typical of Britain's army of women war workers, arriving with a crowd of male workmates to take her turn in the shops.

So much are they a part of the modern industrial scene that it is difficult to believe that the advent of "munitionettes" was one of the sensations on the home front twenty-five years ago.

As soon as the appeal was made to them, however, to come and do their bit in making munitions, women of all classes and occupations—and many who had languished idly in the stifling atmosphere of suburban domesticity—hastened to exchange the long, tight or hobble skirts which swept the ground as they walked, the high-necked, long-sleeved coats, the immense, drooping and befeathered hats, and the ridiculously tiny, high-heeled shoes and whale-boned corsets for the garb which, however ugly, was comfortable, free-and-easy, and undeniably suitable for the job. With the ultra-feminine garments, the munition girls discarded, too, the conventions and restrictions which were out of place in an age when, for the first time in history, women in large numbers became economically independent of their menfolk.

Punctuality is vital, and once inside the factory "Mary Bull's" first job is to clock in. She then goes to the changing room to don overalls.

Photos exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED

All this, however, was by the way. The women made shell-cases and filled them, not to emancipate themselves but to help their country to win. It was in the spring of 1915 that women in large numbers began to make their appearance in the munition factories, and only two years later we find the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Munitions declaring that but for the world of the munitionettes "the Germans would have won the war by now." Their normal working week was 48 hours, for which they received at first a wage of 15/-, but later this was raised by stages to 24/-, to which very often piece rates were added. By comparison a woman employed on filling shells today receives £4 4 0 for a 55-hour week.

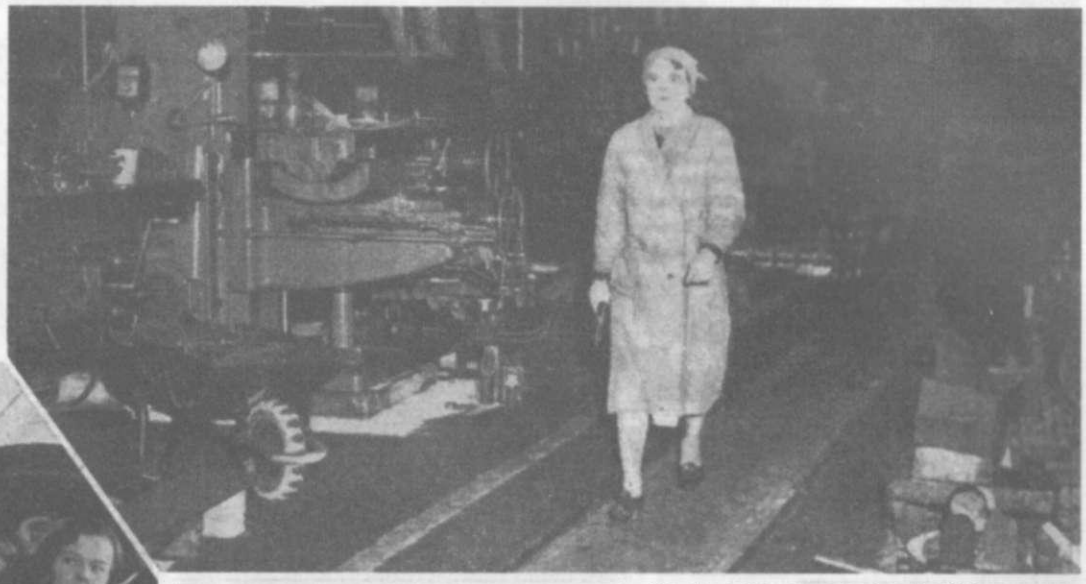
By the spring of 1918 there were nearly three million women employed in Britain's factories, but of these less than a million were directly engaged in munitions production. It may be confidently anticipated that in 1940 at least a million women and girls will be required to join up as munition workers when the big and little guns have begun to blaze away the vast stores of ammunition amassed for the day of battle. The last task of Mr. Humbert Wolfe, the poet-civil servant at the Ministry of Labour, before his sudden death a few weeks ago, was to prepare a survey of labour which showed beyond a doubt that vast numbers of new workers will have to be introduced into our war factories, and a large proportion of these "dilutees" must be women. At the present time Mr. Ernest Brown, the Minister of Labour, is considering the possibility of speeding up the supply of women workers to aircraft factories, and negotiations are proceeding between the engineering employers and the trade unions concerning further female labour in the workshop. One knotty point is that of equal pay for women engaged in work normally done by men.

Engineering is by no means the only industry affected, however. Shells are vastly important, but so, too, are uniforms and leather equipment, gas masks and aeroplane wings and barrage balloons.

More often than not the work women are doing is so much monotonous repetition. They ought to hate it, says Mr. J. B. Priestley, but they don't. "Women like monotonous work because they can do it without having to think, and can let their minds brood on their sister's marriage or the young man who lodges farther down the street."

A Day in the Life of Mary Bull, Arms Worker

In the cloakroom (below) she dons her overall and cap — not very becoming garments, but she does the best she can with the help of her mirror. Then (right) she steps out into the factory and passes between the rows of machines to her particular corner in the vast works.



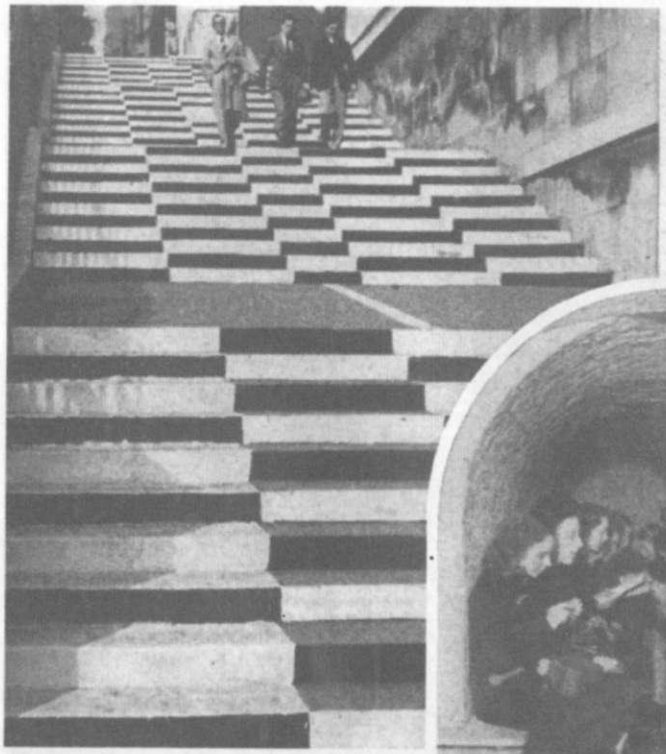
The time has come to knock off for a meal, and (below) she sits in the comfortable factory canteen reading the news over a cup of coffee.

Now she is at the place where she spends her working hours—a little world centred about a lathe which is turning shell-cases for Britain's guns.

With a few minutes to go before resuming work, she enjoys a smoke with one of her mates (above). Soon the bell goes again, however, and (right) she is back at her lathe ready and eager to continue to play her part in Britain's mighty war effort.

Photos exclusive to THE WAR ILLUSTRATED

'Mr. Briton'll See it Through'

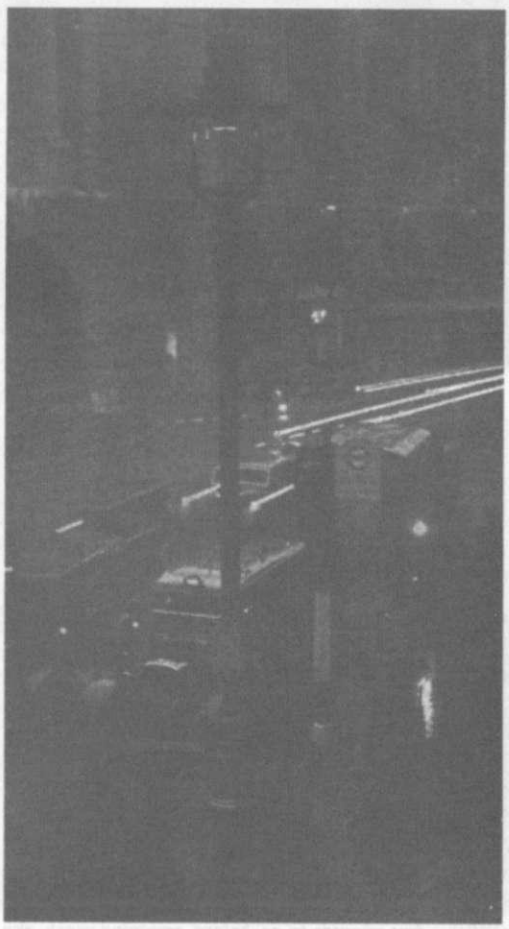


The use of white paint all over Britain has lessened the number of casualties in the black-out. This flight of steps in a hilly town shows the ingenuity exercised to help the pedestrian.

These East Coast fishermen have long faced the perils of the sea, but now a new danger has come upon them—Nazi machine-guns. Yet they still go to sea undaunted.

The tunnel, centre, was built by Judge Jeffreys of "Bloody Assize" memories, at his house in Red Lion Square, Holborn, as a means of escape when he went in terror of his life from the mob. It is now used as an air-raid shelter. The Mayor of Kingston, Sir Edward Scarles, recently asked all those in the Kingston Police Court to wear their gas-masks for five minutes.

These serious young people in the Hebrides are displaying war souvenirs. The Girl Guide has fragments of shells from British anti-aircraft guns during a Nazi air-raid on the Islands. The Sea Cadet holds up the name-plate from a ship's boat of the "Athenia," washed ashore on the Islands. *Photos, F. R. Winstone, L.N.A., B.I.P., Fox and R. Williamson*



Londoners received with gratitude the Home Secretary's concession of "glimmer" lights in the streets of London. Here is one of the first installations of them in Regent Street. They have since been extended to other streets.

THIS SURPRISING WAR - SIX MONTHS AFTER

Some Reflections on What Has - and Has Not - Happened

By the Editor

SURPRISE is of the essence of war, which seldom or never goes "according to plan." That is a phrase most commonly used to cover a surprising and unexpected retreat. Who on September 3rd, 1939, *knew*—some few may have guessed—that the arch-enemy of the Democracies which took up the challenge of Germany and stood to arms against the most iniquitous aggression of modern times was not Hitler, but Stalin? There were many, however, who felt that, despite the foul language in which Hitler describes Stalin and his Bolshevik cut-throats in "Mein Kampf," the ambitions of the two dictators ran on converging rather than on expanding lines and that a thieves' bargain between the two was a far likelier thing than an Anglo-Russian alliance.

Strange Transformation

IT was patent at least five years ago that the grotesquely misnamed Dictatorship of the Proletariat had produced nothing but the uncontrolled Dictatorship of one unscrupulous ruler, lusting for personal power, afraid of his own skin and callously indifferent to the sufferings of the starving masses over whom he had acquired complete domination, while the avowed Dictatorship of the Nazi leader had produced a nation of fear-ridden millions as docile as the voiceless proletarians of the U.S.S.R. The two "ideologies," starting from opposite poles, had converged! This, in a way, was as surprising as anything that has not happened in the war.

That the Berlin-Rome-Tokio axis—to say nothing of the tragic Spanish transformation which it engendered—could have come into being expressly to combat the alleged menace of Bolshevism—and this there is good reason to believe it honestly did, at least so far as Italy, Japan and Nationalist Spain were concerned—could have been so manoeuvred as to become a Berlin-Moscow axis with the Rome, Tokio, Burgos elements left wondering, this has surely been the most surprising of the surprises which the first six months of war have given us. Certainly it is if we can take our minds as far back as September 29th, 1938, when Hitler and Chamberlain signed the Munich agreement.

We would not be at war today had not Stalin willed it so. The deluded British factions that upbraided Chamberlain for not hastening a pact with Russia to prevent Germany pursuing her policy of aggression little guessed that while Britain and France in a last desperate effort for international amity were jointly seeking an honourable understanding and effective co-operation with Russia to prevent war in Europe, Stalin and Hitler were as actively planning a pact to plunge Europe into war.

That is one of the "surprises" history will yet confirm and fully document.

No Stalin, no devastation and partition of Poland. For without the co-operation of the Soviets, personified in the Sinister Dictator of All the Russias, Hitler would not have marched against Poland with the definite knowledge that Britain and France had pledged themselves before the world to resort to arms to prevent a repetition of the Czecho-Slovakian betrayal. But for the Bolshevists joining hands with the Nazis to plunder Poland and any weaker European States they could jointly or severally rape, an independent Poland might have survived, for Germany would not have dared to march with an unpledged Russia on Poland's eastern frontier.

It would, however, be foolish to acquit the Nazi Dictator of one iota of blame for the perplexing situation in which Europe finds itself today. While "World Revolution" is the ideal of the Soviets, "World Dominion" is that of the Nazis, and if the two organizations could but approximate to their ideals, the world would eventually witness a struggle between these two forces of evil in which one would absorb the other, or both, more happily, might perish. That, however, is assuredly not "the far off divine event to which the whole creation moves." And ere long we may discern good reason for this optimism.

> **HITLER'S PROPHECY**
>
> **"We cannot cast out the devil through Beelzebub . . . . the fact of forming an alliance with Russia would be the signal for a new war. And the result of that would be the end of Germany."**
>
> *—Adolf Hitler in "Mein Kampf"*

Stalin's "Comradeship" for Finns

THE atrocious effort of Stalin to impose his comradeship upon Finland, after having placed the little Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania under his heel with Nazi connivance, has shown that beyond his abundant supply of cannon fodder in his millions of dehumanized "workers of the world," the vaunted prowess of the glorious Soviet armies is mainly mythical. The immensely outnumbered Finns, in an all but hopeless resistance, have accounted for twenty times their numbers in destroying the wretched, dumb, driven cattle of Bolshevism thrust at them by the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. And whatever the issue the Finns have rendered a service to the cause of human freedom unequalled in the annals of heroism. Not until the Soviet airmen were replaced by Nazis—as undoubtedly they have been—was even the air offensive against the poorly equipped Finns a decisive factor in the bestial bombing of an inoffensive and highly cultured civilian population.

The Weak-Kneed Neutrals

ALL the Scandinavian peoples are racially superior to the semi-Mongoloid "Great Russians," and assuredly it is not the Soviet menace to Norway, Sweden and Denmark that could have engendered the timorous state of mind disclosed in Norway by the Saga of Joessling Fjord, and in Sweden by the refusal of help to Finland, which is heroically fighting the common battle of Scandinavia, but the warrantable fear of German co-operation with Russia against them with some prearranged division of the spoils.

At the beginning of the war the first surprise and disappointment was the Polish debacle, while the first six months end with the surprise of Finland's heroic, almost incredible resistance to Soviet imperialism. It may be that means will yet be found before it is too late, notwithstanding the chill at the hearts of the Swedish and Norwegian governments, for the Allies to carry effective assistance to the Finns, who are the only body of free people in Europe so far to stand up against the evil forces of tyranny since Poland's heroic but ill-directed effort. The Finns are fighting for the freedom of democratic institutions everywhere—in the western hemisphere as well as in Europe—and he would have been a prophet indeed who in September 1939 could have foretold that!

In between the tragedy of Poland and the epic of Finland the surprises have been many, but may be briefly noted.

(1) The hesitation to start that vast aerial war prophesied by many acute authorities;

(2) the almost complete failure of the aeroplane as a weapon of attack upon surface battleships, which were expected to be at its mercy; but deadly against submarine craft and, in the hands of an inhuman enemy, efficient against unarmed fishing boats and lightships;

(3) the absolutely static alinements of the opposing armies on the Western Front;

(4) the humbling of Nazi naval pride in the immortal battle of the Plate which proved that British seamanship in the Nelson tradition can defeat an enemy of superior armament;

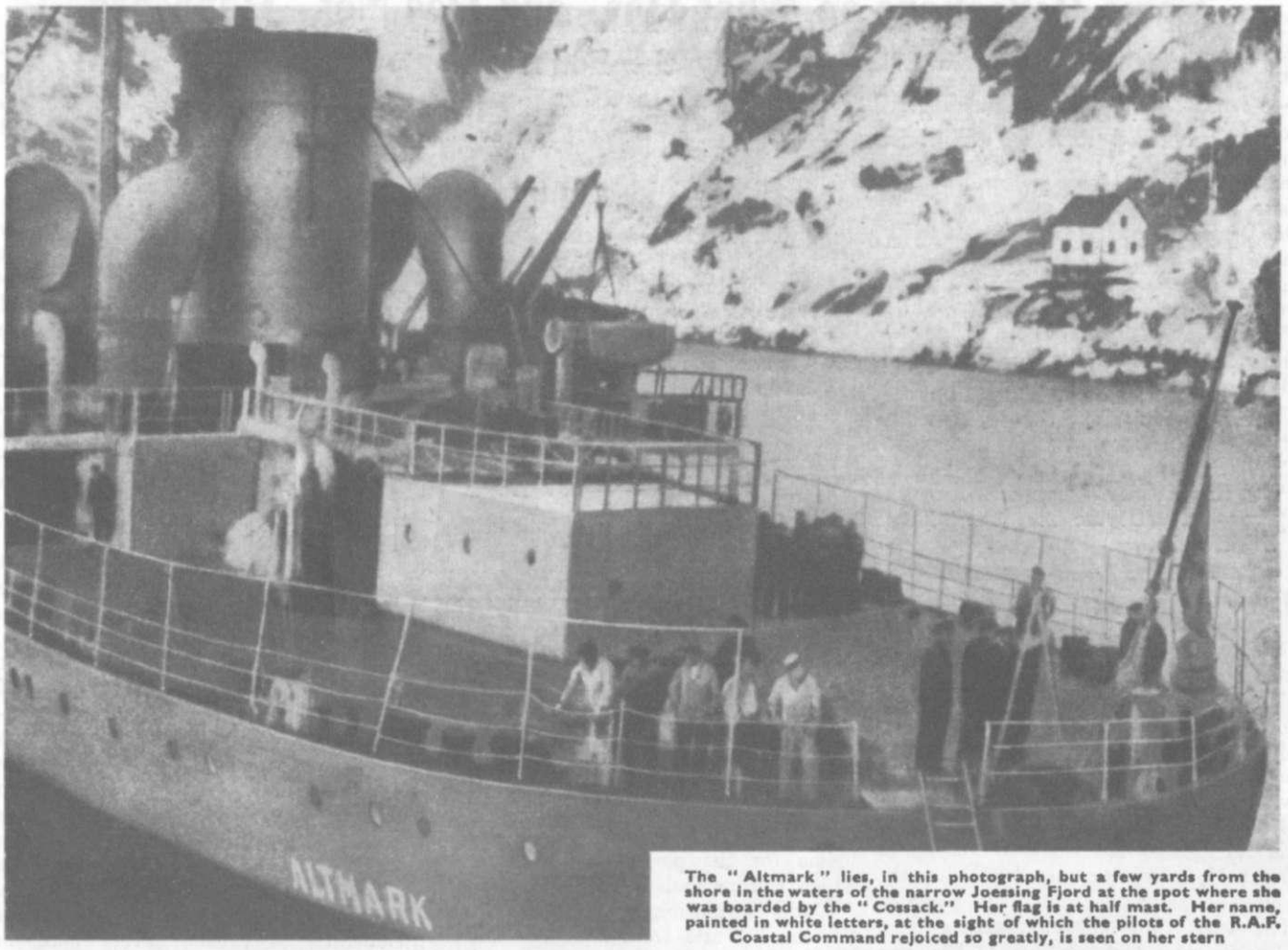
(5) the Nazi policy of scuttling their warships and merchant vessels when cornered by the British, whereby they may have little left to scuttle at the end and so to be unable to emulate Imperial Germany's glorious 1919 Scuttle in Scapa Flow;

(6) the unhindered and unheralded movement of large Canadian contingents across the Atlantic for service with the British armies and the 10,000-mile transport of strong Australian and New Zealand forces to the Suez Canal zone ready for any enemy move in south-east Europe or the Middle East;

(7) the sustained caution of Italy in balancing herself adroitly on the fence.

Continued on page 186

Day by Day the Navy Adds to Its Laurels



The "Altmark" lies, in this photograph, but a few yards from the shore in the waters of the narrow Joessing Fjord at the spot where she was boarded by the "Cossack." Her flag is at half mast. Her name, painted in white letters, at the sight of which the pilots of the R.A.F. Coastal Command rejoiced so greatly, is seen on her stern

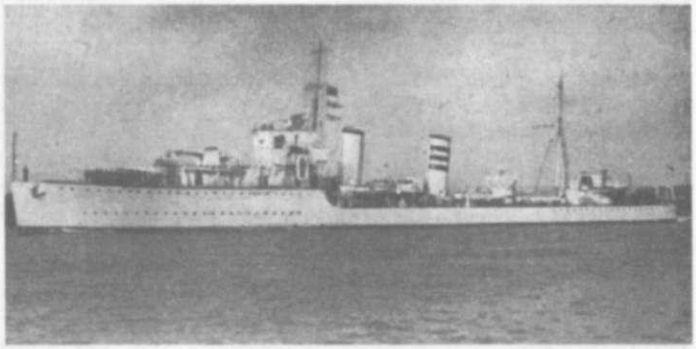
This Surprising War

[*Continued from page* 185]

These are but a chosen few of the unnumbered "surprises" that one could go on noting, for on the Home Front alone we have had many; and here, all criticism notwithstanding, there have been great achievements in profiting by the experiences of the last war—in some cases both wisely and too well. In the first six months of the Great War the British alone had suffered much more than 100,000 casualties, Red Cross hospitals and Red Cross ships had been attacked as a regular military measure by the Hunnish predecessors of the Nazi barbarians, who did not hesitate to use their own Red Cross wagons as mobile machine-gun nests, and to place screens of Belgian men and women in front of their advancing troops in the hope of protecting themselves from Allied fire: an infamy which the Nazis would joyously repeat as a milder form of cruelty than much that they committed and are still continuing in Poland.

Today the battle casualties are negligible and numerous military hospitals in France and Britain stand ready with idle staffs. How long that may last no one can guess, how long the war on land may resemble the moves on a political chess-board rather than the clash of arms possibly neither the Nazi nor the Allied High Command could tell, but it is evident that the initiative is slowly passing to the Allies, who are not likely to risk their precious man power in such wasteful slaughter as at Passchendaele and on the Somme. Let the great clash come soon or late, France and Britain are prepared for it beyond any degree of preparedness known in 1914, and the two Empire Democracies are knit together as one vast commonwealth resolved to defend their liberties against all the machinations of a barbaric and predatory enemy that has been the curse of Europe ever since 2,040 years ago Marius saved Rome from their abominable ancestors, the Cimbri and the Teutones.

We go forward in good faith into the next half-year of the war, for it is no surprise that the British Navy, so powerfully supported by the splendid Navy of France, does in very truth hold the high seas and the narrow seas, and by its far-reaching power, more than by any other factor, we shall eventually attain to victory.



A great triumph for the Royal Navy was the sinking of two U-boats on the same day, February 9, 1940, by H.M. Destroyer "Antelope." She was commanded by Lieut.-Commander R. T. White, R.N., left, who was appointed in September, 1938. The "Antelope," right, is a destroyer of 1,350 tons, launched in 1938. In that week at least 4 and perhaps 6 U-boats were sunk.
Photos, Keystone, Wright & Logan and Universal Pictorial Press

How We Boarded the 'Altmark' in Old Style

A sea-fight in the old style took place when a boarding-party from the destroyer "Cossack" met the crew of the "Altmark" in a hand-to-hand fight and rescued the imprisoned British seamen. Spirited accounts as given by members of the "Cossack's" crew are here reprinted from the "Daily Telegraph" and "Daily Express."

"We were patrolling in glorious weather," said one of the "Cossack's" crew, "when we saw the 'Altmark' coming down the coast. We raced ahead at full speed to cut her off.

"She slipped into a fjord, however, and we missed her and went racing along until we received a signal. We doubled on our tracks and raced back at full speed. Two Norwegian gunboats blocked the entrance to the fjord when we came up. The destroyer 'Ivanhoe' was there.

The attempt of the "Altmark" to escape was hindered by the ice floes in Joessing Fjord. Here, after she had run aground, members of the crew are climbing down a ladder over the stern. *Photo, Associated Press*

"About 7.30 or 8.0 our skipper assembled us. He told us, 'We have got to get those prisoners off.' Then we headed for the fjord.

"There was some shouting and protest as we glided by the two gunboats, and the 'Altmark' shone her searchlight on us as we slowly crunched our way through the ice. Every man was tense with excitement. The boarding-party was at the ready with rifles in hand. We kept our bayonets in the scabbards for the time being.

"As we neared her great bulk—she is a ship of some 12,000 tons—the 'Altmark' suddenly lunged astern at us. Our skipper swung the ship sideways, and the great tanker scraped the full length of the 'Cossack.'

"Our searchlights were trained on her. With a tremendous spring the officer in charge of the boarding-party, 'Jimmy the One' (First Lieutenant) leaped aboard the 'Altmark.'

"I jumped, but missed and was lucky to be able to scramble back on board the 'Cossack' without being ground into paste. The 'Altmark' reversed its diesel engines quickly and made another attempt to ram us, this time stern first. She missed us and her stern crashed on to the rocks. She was aground.

"Meanwhile an officer on the poop of the 'Altmark' fired with a revolver upon the handful of boarders who had gained her decks. They then opened fire with their rifles, fixed their bayonets, and charged.

"As she went aground we nosed alongside and the rest of us gained the deck of the 'Altmark.' Shouts echoed everywhere, but mainly on the forward well-deck and around the bridge.

"Some of the Germans came up with their arms raised in sign of surrender. We pushed them up to the forecastle.

"One of our officers shouted 'Cease fire.' By doing so he saved the lives of many Germans. There were still some odd shots fired.

"Meanwhile, the prisoners were gaining the decks, laughing and cheering. The decks were so crowded we could scarcely move. They came quickly up a gangway aboard the destroyer."

Lieut.-Commander B. T. Turner, who led the "Cossack's" boarding-party on to the "Altmark," is here informally welcomed by his niece, Wendy, when he arrived home. *Photo, G.P.U.*

Nineteen-year-old A.B. Jack Hunt, of Nottingham, described it as "a nice little scrap."

He said: "There was a spot of shooting as we clambered over the side. The Germans were running around shouting 'Murder, murder!' Then some of them came for us.

"A big German in bare feet came at me. In the struggle my rifle fell overboard. I just pitched in with my fists. He bumped his head on a lifeboat and passed out.

"It was close hand-to-hand stuff all the time and you just had to use what you had and make the best of it. One of our fellows fought beside me with a Boy Scout's knife that he got when he was in the naval training school.

"When the Germans saw they hadn't a cat's chance they caved in.

"The biggest thrill was when we got those boys up from below decks. They went just delirious with delight."

I Relayed the Fight to My Mates

The British prisoners on board the "Altmark" must have given up hope of escape when they reached Norwegian waters; then came the dramatic attack by the destroyer "Cossack." Here is a description of the fight as it was heard and seen by the prisoners, published by arrangement with the "Daily Express."

THE one consolation of the prisoners on the "Altmark" was a spy-hole, which was in a door. This hole was about half an inch long and about a sixteenth of an inch deep. Through this they could see the forward part of the ship and something of the sea and surroundings. As they drew near Norway they kept watch at this hole day and night.

While the desperate hand-to-hand fight for mastery of the "Altmark" was going on, one of the prisoners, Fourth Officer John Bammant, a Dovercourt man, was at the spy-hole.

Through it he broadcast a running commentary on the fight to his fellow-

I WAS THERE!

Fourth officer on the "Tairoa" whose crew were captives in the "Altmark," John Bammant, of Dovercourt, watched the boarding of the prison ship by the Royal Navy through a spy-hole, and gave a running commentary to his fellow prisoners.
Photo, Associated Press

prisoners. At 11.30 p.m., on February 16, rifle and revolver fire broke out from close range.

Bammant's shout of "We're going to be rescued" brought men scrambling out of their bunks, cheering and shouting.

Bammant reported: "I can see two ships. I can see their red and green lights. One is almost alongside."

There was a crash. It was the "Altmark" trying to ram the destroyer "Cossack." Then came the sound of grappling hooks on the decks above.

For fear that the prisoners might break out, the German commander had placed a heavy guard over the hatches which imprisoned them. Light fuses were pulled from their sockets, and the prison quarters were plunged into darkness.

The "Altmark" came to a standstill. There were more shots. Then German and English voices intermingled as the fighters got to grips. Then silence.

Among the men rescued from the "Altmark" were many great old British "sea-dogs," such as these two photographed just after their landing at Leith. Their beaming smiles give an instant and obvious reply to the old question "Are we downhearted?"
Photo, Central Press

Suddenly an English voice—"Such a wonderfully cheerful, pleasant, welcome voice," said Bammant—called through the hatch: "Are there any English prisoners down there?"

"Boy, our answer came with such a roar," said Bammant, "it must have nearly knocked his head off. Then we heard scraping noises over our head and the hatch cover was prised off. One by one we climbed up the narrow shaft to the deck and breathed pure, fresh air.

"We found ourselves in a beautiful 'picture-postcard' setting. There we were, bunched up alongside a British destroyer, hemmed in by mountains capped with snow.

"The fighting, if it was still going on, seemed to have left our part of the deck. We could see a bunch of German sailors under guard on the bridge. They hadn't got their hands up, but they seemed to have no fight left.

"We heard afterwards that the officer in charge of the boarding-party had fought his way up to the bridge, using his revolver as a club. Strict orders had been given to the destroyer's men not to use their weapons unless fired on. The Germans were the first to fire. Our men kept to their orders unless actually face to face with fire.

"The second officer of the 'Altmark' was stretched out on the bridge. He had been the last one standing in the way of our men. He put up a fight, but a rap on the head sent him to sleep for a time.

Frank Hill, of Melbourne, Australia, a fireman, who had been taken on to the "Altmark" after the torpedoing of the "Tairoa" in December, told how a German sailor who befriended the English prisoners was shot by one of his own officers from the bridge.

"We were kept in separate companies about the ship," he said, "and to prevent us from coming out on deck the Germans not only locked the door of the hatch but bound it round with wire hawsers.

"The first thing that we knew about the approaching rescue was the sound of shots. Then a German pumpman, who could speak English, and who had been good to us, came to the bulkhead, took off the wire ropes, and opened the door.

"'Englanders,' he shouted, 'a warship is here. Come up.' Immediately a German officer on the bridge drew his revolver and shot the man through the thigh.

"The Navy men were having a brisk scrap with the 'Altmark' fellows round the bridge and on the forward well deck."

This was the scene on the quay at Leith when the men who had been rescued from the "Altmark" came ashore. A policeman is helping one of the injured men with his kit, while behind him come some of the Lascars in whose presence the captain of the Nazi ship took particular delight in humiliating the British officers.
Photo, Central Press

We Were Treated Like Scum Below Deck

Treatment reminiscent of the slave-trading days was meted out to the 299 British seamen who were prisoners of Captain Dau of the "Altmark." Here are the stories of some of them, reprinted by arrangement with the "Daily Telegraph."

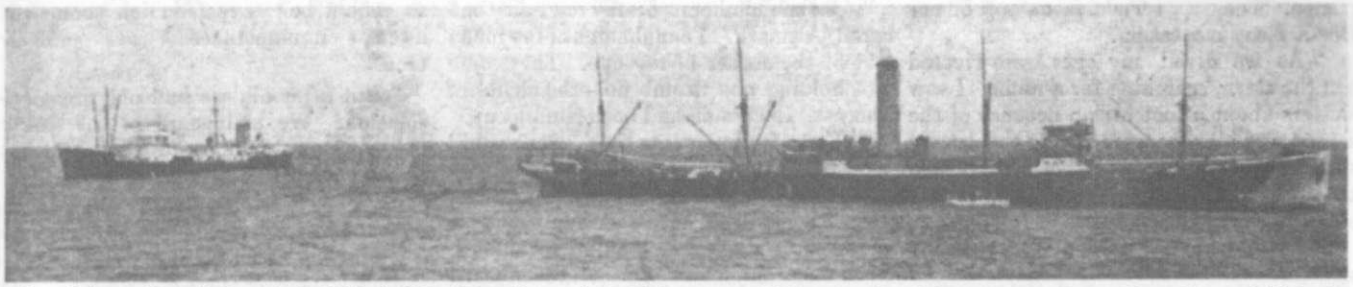
All the ex-prisoners were agreed on one thing—Captain Dau's hatred of the British.

The cruelty of the "Altmark's" captain was vividly described by a young Liverpool seaman, Thomas Morgan, a member of the crew of the "Trevanion." Morgan had been a captive on the "Altmark" since October 22.

"I will never forget the cruelty of the 'Altmark's' captain," he said. "When we were taken captive on board his ship, he said 'Your Government declared war on our Government. We will win the war. There is nothing more certain.

"'I am sorry to say for your sakes that I hate the British people. If anything happens to this ship I will set you free.' Actually he never did.

I WAS THERE!



One of the earliest victims of the "Admiral Graf Spee" was the British steamer "Huntsman," which was sunk off the West Coast of Africa in the middle of October, 1939. She is here seen after she had been captured, with the prison ship "Altmark" standing by to take the crew on board. The "Huntsman" was one of the earliest ships sunk by the pocket battleship, and when the rescued men were landed they showed signs of what they had endured in their four months of captivity. *Photo, Planet News*

"When the Norwegian authorities came on board the hatches were closed upon us and we were bolted into the holds of the ship.

"Never in my life have I lived under such cruel conditions. The food was terrible. One day a box of matches was found in our quarters and we were put on bread and water for three days. On another occasion we were kept down below for ten days.

"Latterly we were allowed on deck for forty minutes every twenty-four hours in which to take exercise. All the rest of the time we were kept below and treated just like scum."

"Forty-five men were put in one hold compartment with iron hatches," said Frederick Thomas, a survivor from the "Trevanion."

"It was a filthy place, with no fresh air. We were lucky to get some carpets from one of the cargoes, otherwise we would have had to sleep on bare boards.

"Conditions were terrible, and the Germans made us as miserable as they possibly could with their cruel, heartless treatment. The only thing we got aboard was a ravenous appetite."

William Wheeler, a New Zealander, and R.N.V.R. gunner of the "Doric Star," said:

"The captain was a vicious type who deliberately gave us a rotten time. Some of the seamen and naval ratings were good to us. One was sentenced to 40 days in the prison cell on bread and water for helping a prisoner to drop a message in a bottle overboard, and another was punished for giving us a bit of tobacco. If anybody wanted to do us a kindness he had to do it secretly.

"We were only allowed on the fo'c'sle head in batches of 15 for 15 minutes every other day," he said, "and there were always eight or nine armed guards watching us. There were small guns on the bridge, and there seemed to be plenty of rifles and machine-guns.

"On one occasion a wooden screen accidentally fell while prisoners were on deck, revealing the muzzle of an unsuspected gun. We realised then that it was no use trying to rush the bridge. They would have shot us down without trouble."

Ernest Spears, of Arbroath, sixth engineer in the "Trevanion," declared that the harshness of the Germans toward the prisoners was something he would never forget.

The punishment cell was a tiny space little more than four feet square, and for the slightest offence men were confined there several days on bread and water.

"There was always somebody in it—and a waiting list, too," he added.

"The Germans had amazing ideas about England. They had been told that if they were caught by the English their hands or feet would be cut off, and the astonishing thing was that they believed it."

The delight of the rescued English men was fully shared by the 67 lascars who were among the prisoners liberated.

Spokesman for a score of his smiling compatriots, Haris Ullah, a native of Calcutta and a member of the "Huntsman's" crew, declared earnestly, in broken English: "I think no punishment in hell can be like that ship."

We Dived Across the 'Altmark's' Decks

It was three aeroplanes of the R.A.F. Coastal Command which first located the "Altmark" as she slunk along the Norwegian coast, and reported her position to the Navy. The story of their exploit is here told by the leader of the formation.

"I WAS roused at 6 a.m. on Friday, February 16," he said, "and in the station Operations Room was told that a very special job was in hand.

"When I heard the name 'Altmark,' I looked at Lloyd's Register of Shipping, but found that the name was not there. I was given a verbal picture of the ship. I was told that she was a 20,000-ton vessel of the tanker type, and that when last seen she was painted black with yellow or white upper works. A distinguishing feature of the ship, I was told, was that her large single funnel was aft.

"We set off, first, for the opposite coast. Visibility was not too good, but our crews have done this journey a number of times since the war began.

"It later became a beautiful day, with gorgeous sunshine and a Mediterranean sky. Visibility increased to more than 40 miles.

"We proceeded to comb thoroughly an area from the extreme south point of Norway northwards. Flying well outside territorial waters, I examined every mile with binoculars. Then, 15 miles ahead, I saw a smudge of smoke, and a minute later a ship with a black hull and cream upper works steaming directly towards us. We swung out slightly to get a broadside view of her. My heart sank when I recognized from her lines that she could not be our quarry.

"But 15 seconds later I spotted something else—a grey ship, with funnel aft—the distinctive feature of the 'Altmark.' We flew up to her at 1000 feet and inspected her through glasses at a mile

The story of the part the Royal Air Force Coastal Command played in cornering the "Altmark" is told in this and the following pages. Here two of the officers of the Coastal Command who took part in that great feat are studying a map of the area in which the Command works. *Photo, Planet News*

I WAS THERE!

range. Then we turned in on top of her for a close inspection.

"As we dived my eyes were riveted on the stern, searching for a name. I saw letters about a foot high. Because of the speed at which we were diving the letters seemed to dance in a jumble. I expected that when they could be read they would spell a Norwegian name.

"I could not suppress a whoop of joy when I saw that they read 'Altmark.' Of course, we know now that the German had reverted to her own name earlier in the week.

"All the members of my crew saw the word 'Altmark.' I caught sight of my men out of the corner of my eye. They were not holding one thumb up—the signal of success. Each man had both thumbs up.

"For a few moments they 'went wild' as we swept across the 'Altmark's' decks at funnel height. I could see only one man on the deck. He was hanging over a rail as if seasick or looking for mines. There was no other sign of life aboard and not the slightest evidence of any alarm. Not a shot was fired from the 'Altmark's' hidden guns. . . ."

I Felt Proud of 'Exeter' and All in Her

H.M.S. "Exeter," the cruiser which bore the brunt of the River Plate battle against the "Graf Spee," returned to Plymouth on February 15. Here are the experiences of some of her men, reprinted from the "Daily Telegraph" and "Daily Mail."

Cmdr. Robert R. Graham, second in command of the "Exeter," said:

"My lasting impression of the battle is the way the men behaved, particularly the wounded, who were really magnificent. We expected great things of them, but their behaviour was far more wonderful than ever we could conceive.

"During the action we came to within 8,000 yards of the 'Graf Spee.'

Marine Reginald Medley, a Yorkshireman, told what happened when a salvo from the "Graf Spee's" 11-inch guns hit forward B turret. He was in that turret at the time, and his escape from serious injury was almost miraculous.

"There were 15 of us," he said, "all Marines, and the action had only just begun. There was a sudden flash, utterly unexpected.

"For a moment I was stunned, but in that period eight Marines had been killed, including the Captain of Marines, who was extremely popular with all of us. Another Marine, a drummer, was killed when the bridge above was wrecked.

"The captain was on the bridge and his eyes were affected rather badly for some time by the flash of the explosion, but he carried on.

"Without hesitation he cried, 'Clear the bridge and take up position'—at a point he indicated. We estimated that we received several 11-inch shells and a number of 5.9-inch shells.

"The loss of so many good fellows was a pretty bad blow. We knew everyone so well, for we had all been together in the 'Exeter' for three years. It was just a happy family, and in the emergency that was a tremendously important thing.

"Marine Russel lost his left arm and had his right leg paralysed. But he went on.

"His method of encouragement could not possibly have been finer. Badly wounded as he was, he went from one man to another disregarding his injuries and urging them on. His example was magnificent; the pity is that when we thought he was pulling through he died.

"The story of the man who had both legs blown off and said he was 'going on as well as could be expected in somewhat adverse circumstances' was perfectly true.

"But after all, we had one great consolation. We had heard of the sinking of the 'Rawalpindi' and we all felt that we had helped to avenge it."

No finer work was done than in the engine room. Everyone in the ship had a word of praise for the "plumbers," as they are called by their colleagues.

Said one officer: "Normally it takes two hours to get up full steam. I don't know how they managed to do it, but within 20 minutes full steam was there. I think that record will take a lot of beating. But then everybody did his best. What else could you do in a ship like ours?

"The camaraderie that had been cultivated after so long a period of service together was simply wonderful."

Corporal Henry Hockings said:

"There was no excitement. I hurried to my place in the gun team of a forward turret. The 15 of us there let the Nazis have it.

"We were closing in on her at top speed and to blazes with the heavier guns. We gave her seven rounds of the best.

"I was just loading for the eighth when there was a crash such as I never thought could happen. An instant later there was another. I remember thinking the second was an echo of the first. It wasn't. A 5.9 shell had scored a direct hit on the front of the turret. An 11-inch followed.

"The turret crumpled. Two mighty flashes lit us up. I was pitched clean off my little seat. I saw men around and in front of me topple over. I picked myself up and I was bleeding from a hand, an arm, and from the face.

"Half a dozen of us came out alive," he continued. "I was the luckiest chap imaginable. Each man beside me was killed, and the team captain just in front of me went out. I think some of the turret mechanism must have shielded me.

"Wounded and dazed, we six crawled out of the turret. Those who could helped others. For us fighting was over. We went repairing and we went round giving brandy to those who needed it."

Outgunned, "Exeter" continued firing from one turret only throughout the battle. Inside that turret was Seaman Tom Surkitt, of Cambridge, who at 18 was the youngest seaman aboard.

"For two hours I sat behind the gun handing out cordite for all I was worth," he said. "Altogether we fired 94 rounds. We doubled our 'action ration' of biscuits and bully beef as we piled into the 'Graf Spee.'

"After what seemed an age we got

The German pocket battleship "Admiral Graf Spee" lies at the bottom of the River Plate, but her name is carried on by the ship's canary of the "Exeter," hatched during the battle and named "Graf Spee." The ship's other mascot was the cat "Splinters," seen in page 175; but the cat and the canary have not met.
Photo, L.N.A.

I WAS THERE!

The Cradle of Britain's Sea Power Welcomes Heroes Once More

The men of the "Ajax" and "Exeter" are here seen marching through Plymouth on the afternoon of Friday, February 16, when they were accorded a civic welcome in the Guildhall.

the 'Cease Fire' signal. I climbed out of the turret into the sunshine, and I saw the havoc that had been done to our dear old ship.

"I saw the bodies of pals who hadn't been as lucky as me laid in rows on the deck. I recognized two special pals lying there among them. That was a bad moment. Then I began to realise the magnificent victory we had gained. I felt proud of 'Exeter' and everybody in her."

Tribute to the inspiring leadership of Capt. Bell was paid by the ship's padre, the Rev. G. F. Grove.

"No one," he said to me, "could hope to serve under a captain inspiring such deep respect.

"It had been a privilege to serve under him. Throughout he has been an example to everybody.

"I cannot tell you anything about the technical details of the action; I am not qualified, but there are instances that remain unforgettable. In the last war I was in the infantry and served in the trenches; in this I happened to be in a naval action which, in the words of the prophet, was hell.

"Captain Bell, by his calm courage, his balance in emergency, has left an indelible impression on all of us."

When the men of the "Ajax" and "Exeter" were entertained by the Lord Mayor of Plymouth an exceptional honour was paid them, for Drake's drum, which is supposed to sound when England is in danger, was brought from Buckland Abbey to the Plymouth Guildhall. Round it sat 300 officers and men of the two ships, men worthy to have fought with Drake himself.

Photos, G.P.U.

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

Thursday, February 15, 1940

Russian offensive on Karelian Isthmus **continued with undiminished violence.** Finns claimed to have repulsed all attacks and to have shot down 16 enemy aircraft.

Advance troops of Russian assault battalions reported to be in vicinity of Leipaesuo, north-east of Summa, 20 miles from Viipuri.

Italian cargo steamer "Giorgio Ohlsen" sunk by mine off East Coast.

Danish ship "Martin Goldsmidt" sunk by enemy action.

Survivors of Norwegian motor-ship "Snestad" sunk by U-boat on Feb. 11, arrived at Bergen. They stated that a U-boat, about to torpedo a Norwegian ship, was sunk by a British destroyer on Feb. 12.

"Exeter," one of cruisers which defeated "Graf Spee," arrived at Plymouth.

Friday, February 16

Admiralty announced that destroyer which sank two U-boats on Feb. 9 was H.M.S. "Antelope."

U-boat bombed and possibly destroyed by machines of R.A.F. Coastal Command.

Finns admitted that Russians had penetrated their forward positions at three points —one east of Summa sector, and two between Muola lake and Vuoksi river—but elsewhere all attacks had been repulsed.

Eight more Soviet 'planes shot down.

Finnish aeroplanes bombed Soviet railways and stations behind the lines.

Swedish Government refused Finnish appeal for direct military assistance and also for passage of foreign troops through their territory.

Reported that Danish steamers "Rhone" and "Sleipner" were torpedoed off north-east coast of Scotland on Thursday night

Saturday, February 17

Admiralty reported that **nearly 300 British prisoners,** taken from ships sunk by "Graf Spee," were **rescued by H.M. destroyer "Cossack"** on Friday night from German auxiliary naval vessel "Altmark," which was stealing down Norwegian coast.

Armed party from destroyer boarded prison vessel while she was taking refuge in Joessing fjord. Rescued men landed at Leith.

Reported that German tanker "Baldur" had been intercepted on Feb. 16 by H.M. destroyer "Ivanhoe" outside Norwegian territorial waters, and had scuttled herself.

British steamer "Baron Ailsa" sank after explosion in North Sea.

British steamer "Langlieford" reported sunk by enemy action on Feb. 14.

Norwegian steamer "Kvernas" sank after explosion.

Sunday, February 18

British Govt. complained to Norwegian Govt. of perfunctory manner in which "Altmark" was examined, and pressed that she should now be interned.

Finns, by tactical retreat to new positions, said to have gained helpful respite.

Reported that near Kuhmo, south of Finnish "waistline," several days' fighting ended in **complete destruction of three Russian battalions.** Twenty-four enemy machines said to have been shot down.

Soviet air raiders bombed Tampere, Pori, Iisalmi and other towns.

British tanker "Imperial Transport" reported blown in two by torpedo on Feb. 11. Crew later returned to stern half of their ship and after four days were picked up by warship and landed in Scotland.

Dutch cargo boat "Ameland" mined in North Sea.

Swedish steamers "Liana" and "Osmed" reported sunk in North Sea.

Norwegian vessel "Sangstad" and Finnish "Wilja" sunk by enemy action.

Spanish steamer "Banderas" sank after explosion.

German steamer "Morea" brought into West Country port by British warship.

THE POETS & THE WAR

XX

TO THE AUSTRALIANS COMING TO HELP US

By John Masefield

Out of your young man's passion to be free
You left your lovely land to be our friends
Unto the death of Anzac, on the sea,
At Ypres, and on the chalk ridge of Pozieres.
Wherever death was grimmest, you were there;
No battle in the world war anywhere
But you helped win, or, failing, met your ends.
Again, you give your friendship: for the sake
Of fellow mortals wronged a world away,
You gladly lay down liberty and take
The frontward road, wherever it may lead.
Advance, Australia! welcome and God speed!
That nation should help nation in her need
Is sunlight to us in this winter day.

The above verses by the Poet Laureate, Mr. John Masefield, dedicated to the Australian troops, were forwarded to Mr. R. G. Menzies, the Commonwealth Prime Minister, by Mr. S. M. Bruce, Australian High Commissioner in London.

Monday, February 19

Admiralty announced that H.M. destroyer "Daring" had been torpedoed and sunk, with loss of nine officers and 148 ratings.

Finns gained another great victory by finally routing Russian 18th Division which for some weeks had been beleaguered north of Lake Ladoga. Much war material was captured.

On Karelian Isthmus Russians began new attack on Taipale.

King of Sweden publicly announced that he fully supported his Government's refusal to give military aid to Finland.

Paris reported that a French detachment was ambushed east of river Nied and 20 lives lost.

Norwegian Storting endorsed statement made by Prof. Koht, Foreign Minister, defending Norway's action with regard to "Altmark."

Reported that Greek steamer "Ellin" had been sunk by U-boat.

German cargo steamer "Rostock" reported captured by French Navy.

Tuesday, February 20

Prime Minister made statement in House of Commons in reply to Norwegian Foreign Minister's account of "Altmark" exploit.

Russian 164th Division reported to be **trapped by Finns** at Kitelae, north-east of Lake Ladoga.

On Karelian Isthmus Finns claimed to have repulsed attacks on east flank of their defences. Other violent attacks were in region north-east of Vuoksi river.

Intense Russian air activity over southern Finland.

Ships attacked by Nazi bombers off English east coast.

Norwegian ship "Hop" reported to be overdue and must be considered lost.

Wednesday, February 21

British trawlers, attacked in North Sea by Nazi bombers, retaliated with fire from newly installed machine-guns.

Blizzards, beginning of usual February snowfall, checked Russian attacks in Isthmus.

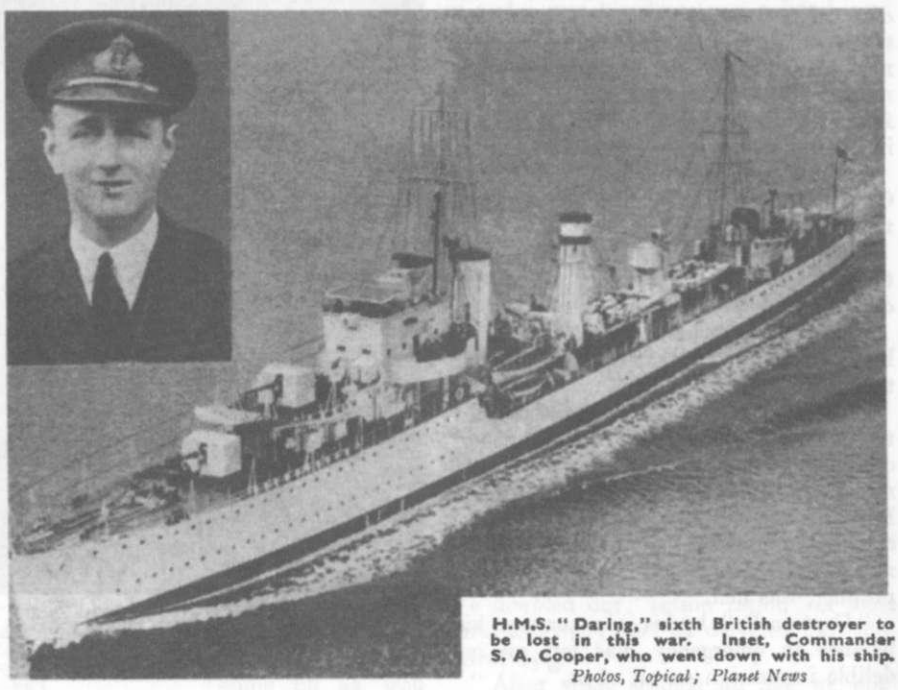
Soviet airmen bombed Swedish town of Pajala, near Finnish frontier.

Finns claimed to have shot down 17 enemy 'planes.

Air Ministry announced that during preceding night R.A.F. aircraft had carried out reconnaissances over Heligoland Bight.

Three Dutch ships reported lost: cargo steamer "Tara," motor tanker "Den Haag," and trawler "Petten."

Survivors of Norwegian steamer "Steinstad," torpedoed on Feb. 15, landed on island off west coast of Eire.



H.M.S. "Daring," sixth British destroyer to be lost in this war. Inset, Commander S. A. Cooper, who went down with his ship.
Photos, Topical; Planet News